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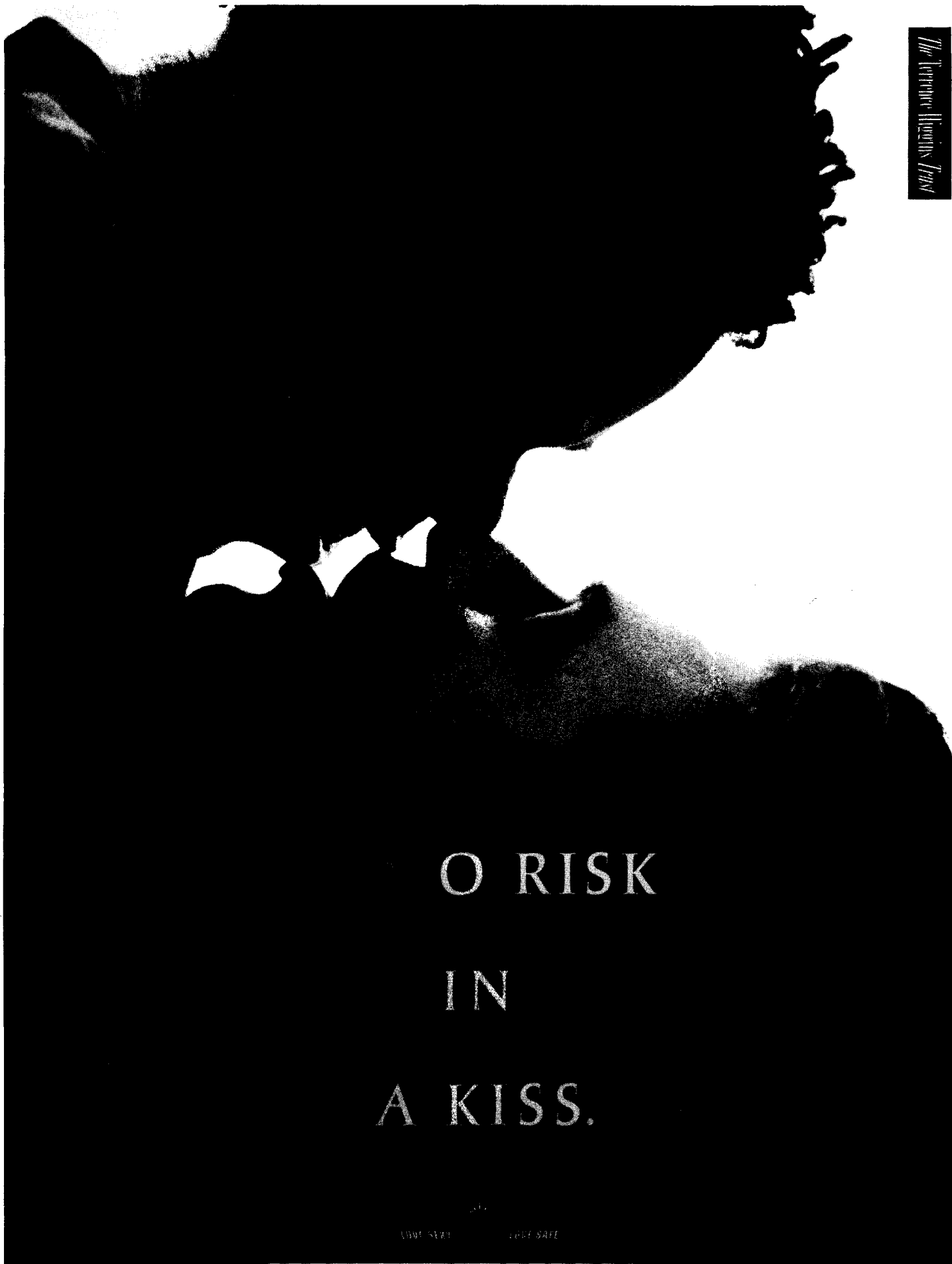


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Wendy Savage examines the embryo bill

# Fertility Rights



Nick Newman and Frank Spooner Pictures

**T**he birth of the first 'test-tube' baby, Louise Brown, in Oldham in 1978 was rightly heralded as an astonishing and important breakthrough for science. The late Patrick Steptoe, then a district hospital gynaecologist with no academic department or facilities to support him, had pioneered the use of the laparoscope in gynaecology. His interest in infertility, enhanced by this new tool, led to his collaboration with the biologist Robert Edwards, and, working quietly outside the academic mainstream, their 1978 success was a bombshell to the profession.

The media heralded the birth of Louise as miraculous. The considerable social, medical and ethical questions arising from the new technology did not start to be discussed until some time later. The committee chaired by Mary Warnock, which was the government's response to this debate, began to take evidence in 1982. By the time they produced their report in 1984, in-vitro fertilisation was widespread and surrogacy had become a reality. An interim voluntary licensing authority was established to oversee IVF research and treatment.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill currently going through parliament is long overdue. The creation of an embryo, with its potential to become a living child and future citizen, cannot be left entirely to the medical profession to decide upon. There must be legislation to protect the public from unscrupulous doctors, and to establish the legal rights of the artificially conceived child. Legal cases in the USA have shown the complexity of the legal and emotional issues involved over the ownership of preserved embryos, or the child of a surrogate mother. In the wake of the US legal tussle over 'Baby M', the bill proposes to consolidate the common-law position here which outlaws surrogacy contracts.

While there will be debate about the details of registration of clinics, maintenance of registers and restriction of IVF services to married couples, the most controversial element will be Clause 11. Unusually, on this clause MPs will be able to vote according to their conscience on whether embryo research should be banned altogether or else made legal up to 14 days.

Sincere and strong views that embryo research is morally wrong are held by a minority of the population and an unknown number of MPs. Mary Warnock's committee suggested the 14-day upper limit for research, before tissues have differentiated and the primitive neural streak from which the brain develops is formed. Scientists anxious to find ways of detecting chromosomal abnormalities, so that couples at risk of transmitting severely handicapping diseases can be reassured, are broadly in favour of this limit.

The idea that in this scientific, legal and ethical minefield, one could introduce time limits for abortion is ludicrous. Yet it appears that abortion amendments may be selected at either the committee or report stage of the bill.

The major issue underlying the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is choice: the choice to try and have a child using medical technology when natural methods fail, the choice to prevent the birth of a handicapped child, the choice to use science to advance knowledge and improve the quality of life. Making choices about such fundamental questions is rarely easy. The issues around embryo research – the prevention of handicap and the possibility of genetic manipulation – cannot be decided by doctors alone, but neither should the legal framework be drawn up on a paternalistic basis. Let us hope that the 94% of MPs who are men will respect the views of the majority of the population and allow women the right to choose to use the benefits of embryo research – or abortion – if they need them. ●

*Wendy Savage*

Beatrix Campbell meets the architect of perestroika

## Moments Of Truth

Tatyana Zaslavskaya is the director of the Soviet National Public Opinion Research Centre, an MP and president of the Soviet Sociology Association. She wrote a major critique of the Soviet economy in 1983, leaked to the West as the *Novosibirsk Manifesto*, which anticipated Gorbachev's perestroika process by two years

**In *The Second Socialist Revolution* (IB Tauris, 1990) you describe the process of your own political self-discovery. Tell us about that drama.**

You are right to speak of drama, because it was very difficult to achieve change. Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, all of us who were in a scientific institute or university had to follow the ideological rules and norms. But through thinking and reading, our minds were moving in directions not confirmed by society.

So for me there appeared a crack. What was I to think, what was I to teach students or write in my books? It's really difficult to have such a crack in yourself.

In about 1981 or '82, I was ill with a very heavy depression, because it was impossible to study the problems which I wanted to. You know, the Brezhnev era was a time of very dark reaction. We radical, progressive scientists tried to express our ideas in a hidden form, thinking that clever readers would understand and use them. But the ideological controllers discovered what we were trying to say quicker than the readers did!

**Your book gives a very powerful picture of you somewhere around Novosibirsk, with agricultural village people who live on little or nothing, working in a barren, oppressed place. The feeling that emerges is that your scientific and political expertise come very strongly from there. Did listening to the people there help you to survive?**

I don't know. I have had luck in my scientific life. I graduated from the Moscow University economics faculty, where I was already *persona non grata* because of my original and disobedient way of thinking.

But then the Academy of Sciences picked me. For 12 years I worked in Moscow, until at the beginning of the 60s the atmosphere in Moscow economic life also became very conservative.

At this time, the Novosibirsk Institute of Economics was organised and I was invited there. There were very young people there, radical, democratic. Academician Aganbegyan was the director and he gathered a very creative team of people together. We lived 3,000 miles from Moscow and 30 kilometres from



Photography: Abel Lagos



Novosibirsk, so party controllers visited us only one or two times a month. All other time was ours to discuss and write what we wanted. If I'd stayed in Moscow, I'm quite sure that I wouldn't be as I am now.

**The collection of data, sociology, public opinion polls – all this is fantastically important to perestroika because, as you say in the book, here is a society which lives with a silence about itself. How do you cope with the fact that much of the new knowledge is such bad news?**

But it was normal to have negative information before. Of course, the majority of official information in the press and the speeches of our leaders was optimistic. We had bad information.

**So you were Cassandra?**

No! But not a convenient person. Lucky for me, I was elected early on, at first a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences and then a full member. That has a very high scientific status.

**You were powerful?**

Not so much powerful as prestigious and respected. For example, the censor felt uncomfortable telling me what could be published, and he'd say: 'You can understand... of course you are right... but I ask you please, let us...' Every day was a fight to publish.

The *Novosibirsk Manifesto* was written for our scientific seminar in Novosibirsk in 1983. There are no state secrets in it, but it was censored.

**Is it published yet?**

Not in Russian. But it was necessary to have it at the seminar, so I went to Aganbegyan and he said, 'Let us publish it for official needs' – that means restricted publication, where everyone who sees a copy has to sign and return it. We published 150 copies. One phrase – about the need for radical change to the whole system of relations of production – was treated as most dangerous.

**Can we talk about the 'whole system'? The government has decided to postpone any radical reform of prices for another three years. What do you think about that?**

I talked about price reform in 1986, over three years ago. I believed it was necessary because economic relations were basically upside-down. It was impossible to stimulate effective production if prices had no content, no meaning. Some were very high and others were only half the actual production cost. But prices were stable, so reform made sense.

Time passed, nothing was done and we got rather fast inflation with fluid prices.

In this situation it seems to me not such a good idea to reform prices. But our government and Prime Minister Ryzhkov now think it's necessary. But not Gorbachev. Gorbachev wanted to calm the population, because nobody believed that the state would compensate their loss. So Gorbachev says, 'Don't worry, no price reforms for two or three years,' and Ryzhkov weeps!

**What do you think?**

I think it could be explained to people what will be gained and what may be lost. We have undertaken two public-opinion studies on price reform. About a year ago 20% had no opinion, the others were divided: about one-quarter for and three-quarters against reform.

Our last study showed that now, about 40% have no determined opinion. So they are thinking, and the rest are equally for and against. I think support for reform will increase and the conditions will then exist for making changes. Because this is the first step to economic reform.

**That means economic reform will be very slow. But aren't people's needs, as well as their expectations, very high?**

Yes, they had high expectations that many goods would be on the shelves, but those expectations have not been realised, and I think that at least for one or two years they can't be realised.

**Will Gorbachev survive?**

We have so many unexpected events now that any predictions are very conditional. Our public-opinion studies show that Gorbachev has high prestige: 77% support his politics. Last year, 46% named him Man Of The Year. But the social situation is so dynamic, so complex, we don't know how events will develop.

**In your book, you present a stiff challenge to conventional wisdoms about marxism. You challenge Marx and Engels about the market. You challenge, implicitly, leninism and bolshevism about the right of the vanguard party to rule. But you remain optimistic about socialism. What is socialism now?**

I would be thankful if you could explain what socialism is!

**Do you want to be a socialist, a communist? Does it matter?**

I am a communist because I am a member of the Communist Party, but now we find people with quite opposite views in the Communist Party.

The Academy of Sciences was asked about two years ago, by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, to analyse all available research and writing and to ask what socialism is.

A special theoretical seminar has been working, already for rather a long time, and we have had many very interesting reports discussing the history of socialist views, from utopian socialism, the Marx/Engels stage and Lenin, the problems of property and socialism, the modern capitalist countries, Swedish socialism, and of course our own distorted form.

Unfortunately, the result of all this work up to now is that the notion of socialism can't be determined strictly scientifically. The main tradition was that socialism is a kind of society, just as we constructed in our country. But now, when we see the negative results, it's very hard to identify a theoretical notion of socialism with our own practice.

**The informal world of civil society: personal life, consumption, the reproduction of everyday life, is in crisis in the Soviet Union. And women bear the burden of that crisis. How will that sphere be reformed?**

The status of women is much worse now than for some years, because they are engaged in this sphere – for example, shopping. It takes much more time and labour to get the necessary goods, and then to cook, because now there's nothing, no potatoes, no butter and so on. If perestroika is to be successful, there must be good shopping! Then women will be more free. Our Supreme Soviet has a special committee for women's problems, and they are working out some laws in favour of women.

**But is there any concern with the problem of men? The problem of patriarchy?**

Indirectly. For example, there is consideration of a law where men would get the right to stay with the children if the family decides that would be best.

**Political life in the Soviet Union is now filled with many different movements and political projects. Are you pleased by this pluralism or are you afraid of it?**

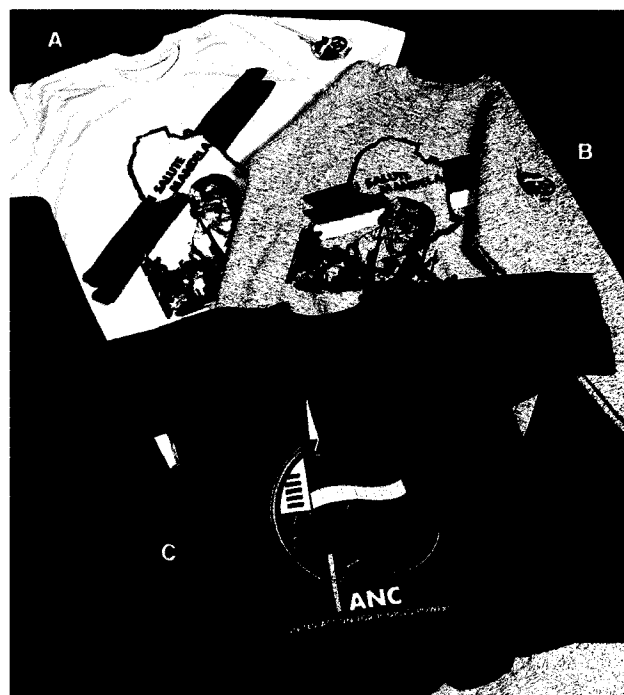
Both. I am pleased, of course, because this is a necessary way of activating the population. And the process can't be refined, pure, with white gloves, because it is the voice of people who have no traditions of civilised political life.

On the other hand, when I see with my own eyes very reactionary movements, so aggressive with their threats – I also get threatening letters – it is not pleasant. But I think that is a necessary price for the political development of society.

**Do you think the Communist Party should split?**

I think it should, because it's a very strange phenomenon, a political party which is at least three different parties. ●

# We Salute Nelson Mandela of the ANC



Photography: Abel Lagos

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| C. ANC Emblem T-shirt. Black or white. L & XL.          | £6.50  |      |        |     |       |
| D. ANC Watch. 'Swatch' type with 12 months' guarantee.  | £24.00 |      |        |     |       |
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| H. Africa wooden badge.                                 | £1.45  |      |        |     |       |
| I. Africa wooden earrings.                              | £2.95  |      |        |     |       |
| J. Africa wooden necklet with leather thong.            | £1.50  |      |        |     |       |
| K. ANC Emblem enamel badge.                             | £2.70  |      |        |     |       |
| L. ANC Emblem enamel earrings.                          | £6.00  |      |        |     |       |
| M. ANC Flag enamel badge.                               | £2.15  |      |        |     |       |
| N. ANC Flag enamel earrings.                            | £5.00  |      |        |     |       |
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Martin Kettle on Italy's government in waiting

## Optimism Of The Will

**Most of the international comment about the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) decision to abandon its name and re-launch itself has inevitably focused on global themes. The crisis of the PCI has been treated as yet another, if particularly emblematic, aspect of the collapse of the Bolshevik tradition.**

Well, it is partly that, of course. It is true that none of the events in the PCI which culminated in the two-to-one vote for change at March's Bologna congress would have happened in the way they did, had it not been for the collapse in Eastern Europe. The idea of a change of the party's name had been around for many months beforehand, but it hadn't been widely supported. It took the breaching of the Berlin Wall last November 9 to propel Achille Occhetto – who had trenchantly rejected such a change at the PCI's Rome congress eight months earlier – into action. Just three days after the Wall came down he travelled to Bologna to announce the need for a relaunch and a new name.

Yet the speed of that response was misleading. After all, no communist party in Western Europe ought to have been better protected by its own past against the need to move so quickly. But paradoxically, the PCI has always acted as though it felt direct responsibility to respond to the actions of communist regimes, even those with which it had long ago broken. The same happened after Tiananmen Square, when the PCI was swamped with intense argument. Nothing like that occurred in any other Western communist or socialist party.

The explanation for this is that in Italy the stakes are higher. The PCI, which even today commands 27% support, remains a huge force in Italian political and social life. The statistics are familiar: 10m votes, 1.4m members. And you only have to go to a PCI stronghold like Modena, Siena or, of course, Bologna to recognise a sense of communist establishment which doesn't exist in any other

part of the West.

Yet, as ever, the PCI faces a fight for political legitimacy at national level. The defining feature of all Italian governments since 1945 is that, however they may change in other ways, they will always exclude the PCI. So it is hardly remarkable that one of the essential characteristics of the modern PCI is its hunger for government.

It is easy to mock this desire for respectability, which also reveals itself from time to time in the party's somewhat excessive sense of its own dignity. But since the PCI is a respectable party, in the best sense, it is not exactly surprising that its leaders should be driven by a sense of indignation that almost any other Italian party, however corrupt or small, can get in on the Rome governmental act while the PCI is barred.

In this light, the PCI's decision to reform itself can be seen as entirely consistent with its tradition. It is trying, yet again, to claim its true place within Italian political life. Its change of identity becomes not a controlled retreat in the face of the global crisis of communism but, at its most optimistic, another daring attempt to break the mould of Italian politics.

Ever since the failure of the 'historic compromise' policy

of the 1970s, in which Enrico Berlinguer tried to bring the party together with the ruling Christian Democrats, the key question for the Italian Left has been the relationship between the Communists and the Socialists. In Berlinguer's time, this may not have appeared so obvious, since the Socialists were a spent force and the PCI's pretensions to exclusive embodiment of the democratic socialist tradition were more beguiling.

Time and Bettino Craxi have proved those hopes false. If the limited but significant reassertion of the Socialist Party under Craxi has proved anything, it is that the PCI cannot any longer truthfully sustain its claim to be the exclusive voice of the Italian Left. Occhetto admitted as much in Bologna and he also stressed that the PCI cannot confine itself forever to preaching ideals. It has to have a strategy for getting power.

That is what Occhetto's moves are all about. If the PCI were simply to sit back and wait for power, it would gradually fade from view. From time to time there would be tactical opportunities, of course, like the current split within the Christian Democrats, caused by the frustration of its left

wing with its leadership's supineness in dealing with the skilful Craxi. But the PCI also desperately needs to make its own luck.

The debate about how to do that has been going on for more than a generation. As the voting in Bologna, which clearly reflected party opinion around Italy, made evident, the PCI is today still very divided. But it is a mistake to imagine that division will necessarily mean a split.

What it does mean is a shift in the balance of forces within the PCI. The left, whose figurehead is Pietro Ingrao,

**'The defining feature of all Italian governments since 1945 is that they will always exclude the PCI.'**

argues for a staunchly independent party, against close ties with the Socialists; and it bitterly opposes the PCI's existing pro-Nato foreign policy. The right, embodied by Giorgio Napolitano, wants to go social-democratic, to work closely with other parties, particularly the Socialists, and within existing international alliances. Achille Occhetto comes historically from the left of this spectrum. In inter-party terms, therefore, the significance of his current campaign is that this left-winger has thrown his authority behind the policies of the right wing.

For the moment, much will hang on the results of the local elections in Italy in May. These are extremely important, involving all municipal and regional governments. If the PCI vote slides badly, then the party could be heading ever downwards into another decade of decline. If the vote holds up, it will be taken as vindication of Occhetto's daring.

After that, all kinds of possibilities are open, and not just with Craxi, though the Socialist leader has been notably warm towards the PCI's Bologna decisions. Either way, the realignment of Italian politics is firmly underway. The question now is whether Achille Occhetto turns out to be Italy's Francois Mitterrand – or its David Owen. ●



Illustration: Michael Sheehy

Jonathan Glancey examines the advertisers' designs on sport

## This Sporting Life

'Sport, sport, masculine sport,' Vivian Stanhall, of the erstwhile Bonzo Dog Doodah Band, sang some 20 years ago, 'Equips a young man for society / Yes, sport turns out a jolly good sort / It's an odd boy who doesn't like sport.'

Only a public school-educated Briton could have written this ditty. Only an ex-public school boy would remember sport as a form of ritualistic and humiliating punishment, to be satirised in later life.

The new **Sport 90** exhibition at London's Design Museum (April 6 – May 27) reviews a very different type of humiliation: the descent of sports equipment and sportswear into the world of fiercely competitive corporate advertising. If only all those suffering schoolboys and schoolgirls (do they still suffer?) could have been paid to suffer by corporate sponsors, those pointless cross-country runs would have bought consolation at the tuck shop, if nowhere else.

The Design Museum show, brilliantly designed by architects Powell-Tuck, Connor and Orefelt, tackles a number of issues. The most intriguing one is the relationship between sportswear, sports

equipment, fashion and advertising. Sport and its accoutrements are now designed to generate vast sums of advertising revenue. Health and wellbeing are becoming at best mere by-products of manufacturers' race to the top of the advertising league.

Since the original Olympic Games, sport has always meant to be ennobling, character-building, aimed at turning seven-stone weaklings into people capable of kicking sand in others' faces.

Sport is meant to be challenging, life-enhancing and fun. Yet, it has also long had a more sinister face. It has been used to instil military spirit into pacifist weaklings, to demonstrate how one race or nation is superior to another, to promote cigarettes, petrol, oil and brake dust, to satisfy the need for 'bread and circuses'.

Sport has been variously politicised, commercialised and corrupted. It has also given pleasure and a sense of wellbeing to millions over endless generations, controlled the release of potentially-destructive charges of adrenalin, and, if the 'playing fields of Eton' theory holds true, has enabled

countries with God or right on their side to triumph over those with the devil or the extreme Right on theirs.

Military metaphors make sense when discussing organised sport, for – just like soldiers on parade – footballers, cricketers and athletes dress in uniforms and wield hardware that derives in part from weapons, in the case of cricketers and javelin throwers; or the severed heads of enemies, in the example of football. Racing drivers can be seen as grounded fighter pilots and American footballers as only a mildly less effective fighting force than the Green Berets.

In some sports the weapons and tactics employed are identical to those of warfare: the war against grouse, pheasant, badger, rabbit and fox. At British public schools the same boys who rose to the highest ranks in the officer training corps were those who spent most of their time on the playing fields. The fact that the word 'field' is used both for scenes of scrums and carnage seems appropriate.

But the link between militarism and sport has been declining as consumerism

has replaced jingoism as a key driving force in society. This change has radically influenced the way that people dress for sport, the equipment they use and the spirit they play under.

A modern motor race, for example, is more advertising festival than challenge between motorised jockeys. Until the late 1960s, racing cars were painted in national colours: green for Great Britain, red for Italy, blue for France, white for Germany and so on. Jingoism ruled the roost. Today, the cars are 200mph billboards. Television

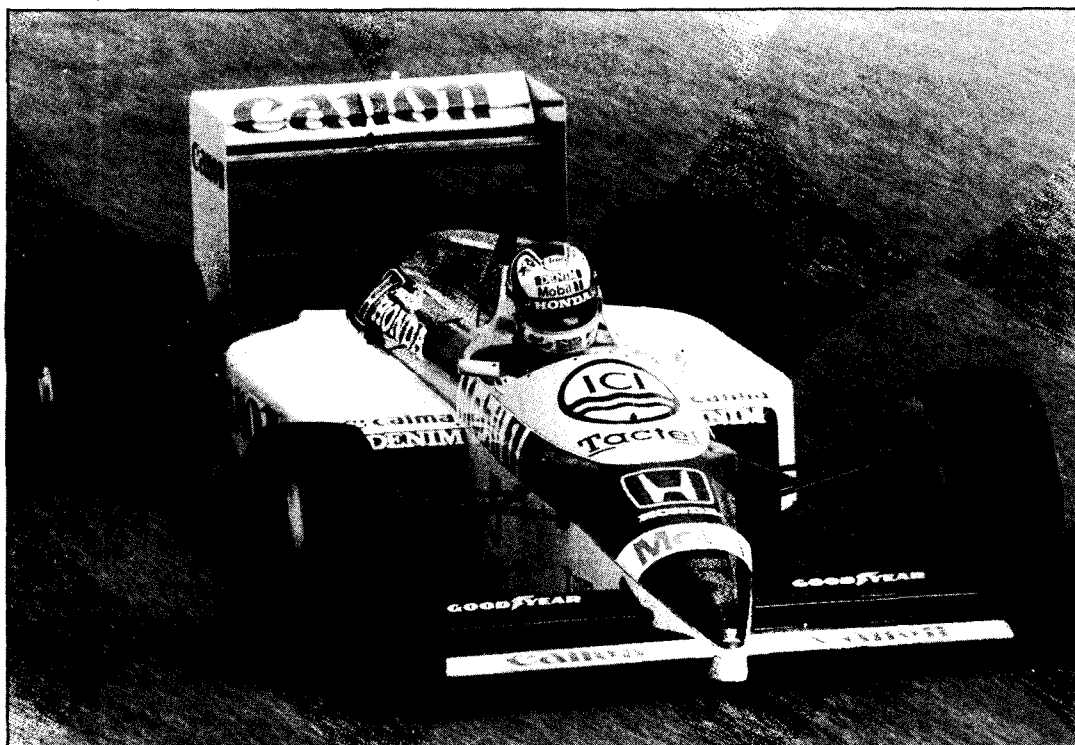
**'It is probably true that you will ski faster with fashion-generation skis, but if your ski-ing is not up to scratch then this might be dangerous rather than fun.'**

cameras slow the cars to a snail's pace on screen so viewers get no sense of speed, no impression of the tremendous g-forces being generated. But they do get a good close-up of advertising logos.

At the end of each race, the winning drivers are forced to wear extraordinary high-rise peaked caps. If they wore these on any other occasion they would be laughed out of court. But on the trackside these hats are designed to bear as many advertising labels as physically possible. The hats may yet have to grow taller to accommodate the names of even more sponsors as the cost of motor racing escalates.

If motor racing set the advertising sponsorship ball rolling, other sports fell quickly into line. Now Boris Becker is in the ridiculous position of having to paint out the logos on tennis racquets not provided by his major sponsor. It was not so long ago when umpires refused American professionals to play if their sports bag carried even the most innocuous and unsponsored Coke or Pepsi logo.

Today, the centre court at Wimbledon is a highly animated sports fashionwear and accessory show. Cricketers like to dress in any-



**Gripping stuff: It takes some horsepower to shift all that advertising**

thing other than white flannel for the television cameras. Cyclists squeeze tiny advertising logos on to minimalist stream-lined racers.

In fact very few events are now logo-free: the Boat Race, a few rugby internationals and, most popular of all, racing. A jockey's flamboyant silks do announce the name of the stable's owners to those well-versed in racing lore, but to people who go along to meets just for the ride, the silks are simply a delightful part of the established racing scene.

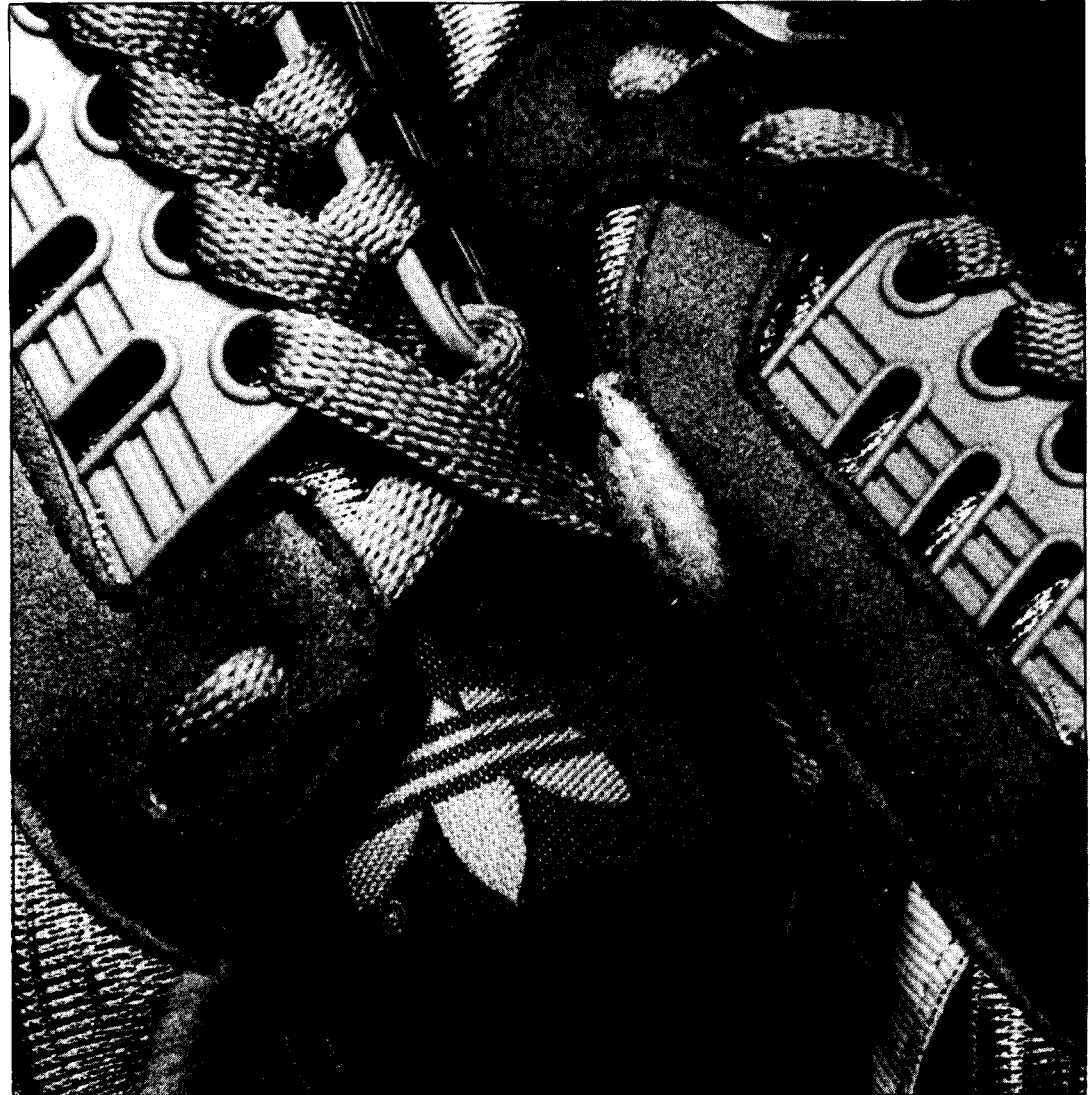
The commercialisation of sport is not seen just in this vast increase in advertising and the pox-like spread of the corporate sponsor's logo; it is also witnessed in the transfer of sports clothes and equipment to the realm of high-street fashion.

Sportswear is now *de rigueur* for fashion victims as well as most of the British population off-duty. There are few more incongruous sights than that of paunchy people decked out in sportswear. Their clothes scream health and fitness; their posture and colour suggest an addiction to watching sport on television rather than active participation.

It is rather ironic that the weekend sportswear adopted by so many Britons is an outward sign of slobbish and fundamentally lazy behaviour. Sportswear means an end to grooming: no more polishing shoes, pressing trousers, ironing shirts. Sweatshirts and trainers undermine civic values, destroy the dignity of city streets, reduce everyone to a human advertising hoarding.

Sports equipment has also changed fundamentally since sportswear became treated in the same way as couture and high-street fashion.

Couture sports equipment boosted sales of skis, tennis racquets and cricket bats dramatically during the 1980s. Where, traditionally, a cricket bat or tennis racquet would last the amateur player several seasons and maybe a decade or more, the new logo-emblazoned carbon-fibre racquets of the 80s were designed to complement ap-



**Tongue-tied: The ubiquitous trainer – with unusually modest logo**

pearances.

Undoubtedly a carbon-fibre tennis racquet will drive a ball that much harder and give an edge to a good amateur player's performance, but its effect is marginal, to put it generously, on players who dress up for a few weeks each summer during Wimbledon to swing a casual racquet.

Ski equipment is perhaps the most absurd example of sports equipment taken too far into the world of fashion. There is, as Helen Rees, the Design Museum's director, points out in her introduction to the exhibition, something quite absurd about people who spend a maximum of two weeks a year on the slopes – and most of that in bars and bedrooms – arguing about the relative merits of different types of hi-tech ski

boots. It is probably true that you will ski faster with fashion-generation skis, but if your ski-ing is not up to scratch then this might be dangerous rather than fun.

What sports equipment manufacturers have learned is an old advertising game that the motor industry, for example, has been using for decades. Increase the power of a bog-standard family hack by a few degrees, stick a 'turbo' badge, flared wheel arches and a spoiler on the back and you can hike up the price to real advantage.

But the success of sports equipment and sportswear manufacturers in the 1980s was largely due to dramatic change in high-street retailing in the same period. The Olympus chain of stores, for example, gave shorts and

squash racquets the Marks & Spencer treatment. Where once you felt you had to know something about sport before plucking up courage to enter a specialist shop, now sport and all its paraphernalia seemed as daunting as racks of polyester-cotton mix socks and knickers.

The backlash against advertising and fashion-led sport will surely come in the amateur world. In the professional realm it will only increase.

However, if money is pumped into sport's pseudo uniforms and weaponry rather than real guns and body armour, who can deny racing drivers their silly hats or tennis players their ostentatious slugs of Fanta? Better an advertising hoarding than a target. ●

# A Dog's Life

*From Jytte Juul Jensen and Ole Langsted in Arhus, Denmark*  
James Runcie writes that the British do not like children, but prefer dogs (MT March). We must say that the Danes do like children.

If you state the opinion publicly in Denmark that you hate children, people will find you interesting – maybe a little weird. But you cannot similarly say that you hate pets. You will be met either with furious reactions or with total silence, frozen out. But anyway, we love our children.

The welfare state here provides good childcare. When a mother works – and in fact 95% of all mothers of 0–6 year-olds do work – most of the children are in public daycare services with well-educated staff and well-equipped facilities.

In many public places you find that children have been thought about: you only have to go a few hundred metres to find a public playground, which is well-supplied with play equipment and well-maintained (repairs some-

times have to be done because of destruction by adults).

When you visit a restaurant, you will always find a children's menu. And when you go to the toilets, there are special small toilets for the children (making life difficult for adults when all the other toilets are occupied!). If you have to travel, you can order a special family compartment on the train, which is specially fitted-out for children.

These are just a few examples of the 'humanisation of childhood' in Danish society. Children are no longer seen only as adults in miniature or as inarticulate beings.

And this humanisation is even reflected in legislation. More and more laws are directly about or for children, unlike in earlier times when children were seen only as an appendage of families in the eyes of the law.

In the private sphere too, one can see many small signs of the humanisation of childhood. For example, if, 20 years ago, you had come to the front door of a family house where there

were children, you would have read on the name-plate: 'Mr Jensen'. Ten years ago, you could have read the names of both husband and wife. But today you can't arrive on the doorstep without being presented with the names of the whole family, even very young children. The way a family portrays itself to the outside world has changed, so nowadays children see themselves and are seen as independent human beings.

In most Danish families, children are no longer brought up to be silent, obedient and well-behaved. On the contrary, they are encouraged to give their opinions and intervene in discussions, to a degree where it can be difficult for adults to have a conversation without being interrupted by children.

As you see, in Denmark we love children, maybe even more than dogs. But we admit there are things we love even more than children. For example, more people are employed here to take care of our money than to take care of our children! ●

## Vive La Difference!

A few points for your 'New man and childcare' section.

Avoid Marseilles airport. There are no changing facilities at all for babies and very few loos for adults. Avoid Provencal towns. The pavements are broken, covered with cars and strewn, pleasantly for most, with café chairs and tables.

Avoid Air France. They do not provide extra safety belts for babies and toddlers. Amazingly, British Airways do. Do not expect to find much in the way of public transport.

If you stay in practice, a sling can be used on long journeys much more easily than a push-chair, even with heavy babies.

Muslin and terry nappies are much cheaper in the not-very-long run and environmentally streets ahead. French nappies still appear to be bleached. If MT would like a short article on nappies I would do one any time.

Personally, I find the French and British equally enthusiastic about babies and dogs, although I am only keen on the former.

But I agree with James Runcie that financial and practical help for parents and babies is rock bottom in this country. ●

*Amanda Norrie, London*

## Liberating Theology

*From Elizabeth Stuart, lecturer in theology and convenor of the RC caucus of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement*

There will be many Roman Catholics who, like me, can identify with Rex Wockner's disgust and despair at the way in which the Church authorities treat lesbian and gay people and those who are HIV+ or suffering from Aids (MT March).

Many of us also feel betrayed by those priests who are gay themselves but continue to propagate the Church's teaching that homosexuality is an intrinsic moral disorder. Whilst it is now well-known that a large proportion of Anglican clergy are gay, a wall of silence surrounds the sexuality of Catholic priests. This is because of the law of celibacy, which results in priests acting and being treated as non-persons, without sexuality. It is little wonder then that the Church authorities have such difficulty in understanding sexuality.

However, one of the most helpful ideas to emerge from liberation theology (which owes not a little to marxism) and to be taken on board by the Catholic Church at the Second

Vatican Council is that 'the Church' is not the pope, bishops and priests. Rather, it is the whole people of God who stand equal before him.

Liberation theology also insists that God is on the side of the powerless, oppressed and marginalised and that the clergy are there to listen to and serve these people.

This model of the Church – which is nothing new, one has only to read the New Testament to realise that – has given many gay Catholics, clergy and lay alike, the courage to remain in the Church, despite its potentially homophobic teaching and bishops, to fight for change from within.

In the United States, Dignity, an organisation for gay Catholics with over 5,000 members, and in Britain similar organisations like Quest and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, challenge the Church's teaching by exposing the bad theology behind it.

They seek to break the wall of silence surrounding gay priests and an increasing number of priests are prepared to 'come out' and tell their stories. Most impor-

tantly, these groups try to reach out in a Christ-like manner of unconditional love and affirmation to the gay community.

New Yorkers may have to put up with Cardinal O'Connor, but they are also blessed with Fr Bernard Lynch, who openly works with the gay community and those suffering with Aids, despite repeated attempts by the Church authorities to prevent him doing so.

In Britain, work has begun on setting up a respite centre in Cornwall for those with Aids, in the grounds of a convent, which has received generous donations from the Catholic Church. The staff are committed to total acceptance and care, regardless of the sexuality of the client.

All over the world, Catholic priests and people are affirming the goodness of gay love and relationships. The fact that some of those who think they are at the top are not doing so, is unfortunate, and I would say a betrayal of the gospel, but their behaviour is not sufficient reason to dismiss the whole Church as Mr Wockner does.

The real Church is to be found in gay bars and homes, in hospices and hospitals, where Christ would be. ●

## Shopping Trouble

How children feature in society's considerations and planning is very important but really neglected.

For example, shopping. We all have to do it but it is made hell for parents and children alike. A friend says, 'most people would rather starve than take the kids shopping'. Usually, I wouldn't rather starve so mine come with me. I am a wreck after shopping in Sainsburys with twins aged two. So is the shopping! After they've ram-paged down the aisles rearranging the wine section and munching through packets of assorted biscuits, I grab them and put them both into the trolley. I rush around like lightening, knowing I have only a few minutes before they are climbing out, having broken into the eggs and the yoghurts.

It would not take much imagination, organisation and finance to provide equipped play areas in these shops.

By contrast take McDonalds. Terrible food but hoards of people eat there. How much of their success is due to simple things like supplying high-chairs and attempting some degree of child orientation? ●

*Jackie Heywood, London*

## Gloss Dress

The great debate over the future of tv (MT March) has settled down into a confrontation between makers of the 'popular' and the defenders of 'quality'.

Neither side seems inclined to define terms but it has become a truism that 'quality' tv is, to use Mark Lawson's phrase, 'ruinously expensive'. He goes on to cite the examples of *She's Been Away* and *Summer's Lease*.

I've no idea in what sense the word 'quality' is being used here, unless it is a reference to the good breeding of the people involved in these productions – certainly I remember one dear old peer sitting, apparently stuffed, throughout the former and a couple of knights knocking round both of them.

If you sugar a show with dukes etc, of course it is going to be expensive. This does not mean it is going to be any good.

I'm sure Mark Lawson realises this. What he might not be aware of is the way these expensive tranquilisers and *folies de grandeur* have furnished the men with the cheque books with the perfect get-out clause.

Time and again these days they use the fact that they patently can no longer risk that kind of money as an excuse for not risking their necks.

Innovative, challenging tv need not be expensive. But it will always involve taking a chance, making a stance. I'm not just talking here about the *Mahabharata* or *Ghosts In The Machine*; lots of 'popular' series bombed first time out and were kept alive by the courage of their commissioning editors. *Brookside* for one. *Minder* for another. Both these programmes set out to be popular, watchable tv that could surprise you by occasionally catching light or turning themselves upside down.

By enforcing the distinction between quality and popular, and by landing the 'quality' end with gloss dress like *She's Been Away*, the current debate is helping the advertisers to define and isolate two mutually-exclusive markets. And this will be to nobody's benefit but their own.●

Frank Cottrell Boyce, Liverpool

## Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to MT Letters, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

## Marxism's Mileage

The Left is coming of age. Nowadays people seem to demand that ideology satisfy the test of personal experience before it is accepted as appropriate to political action. We no longer allow ourselves the hypocrisy of suggesting to others what we do not live ourselves – or at least we try.

But in this zeal for ideological independence Gareth Stedman Jones goes a little too far (MT February) in dismissing the wisdom of the Left's father.

Our own studies have led us to conclude that the theory underpinning the whole of Marx's intellectual endeavour – that of alienation – is still little-understood: a position which Stedman Jones confirms with his reference to the whole theory as 'cryptic utterances' and his suggestion that nobody else understands it either.

Marx's assertion about a higher form of society is simply based on the idea that if 'bosses' no longer interfere in our natural learning processes then we will become more aware of our individual potential, and in un-alienated exchange of what we produce, also more aware of each other.

In terms of material production and its role in human development, Marx showed the underlying mechanism of how capitalism distorted learning and psychological growth.

What he failed to theorise was the relationship between personal fears and aversions that keep people socially apart (racism, sexism, etc.), and political and social formations. Nor could he consequently elaborate a relationship between economically-mediated exploitation and more direct interpersonal exploitation.

There is a richness of un-

derstanding yet to be gleaned from Marx. For some of us there may be something to be gained by returning to Marx, not with belief but with critical analysis, so that we may separate the wisdom of our socialist father from his rather impatient and dictatorial instruction.●

C Allets & M Weiss, East Sussex

I have never been influenced by Marx's views and bought your highly-esteemed magazine only because I was curious to know what you made of events in Eastern Europe and was encouraged by the cover of Marx with egg on his face (MT February).

Your leader seemed admirable (junk Marx!) and left the question of the future of socialism open, and I was impressed by Zygmunt Bauman's analysis, equating the bankruptcy of socialism with the demise of modernity. Much of it coincides with the thinking of non-socialists like myself.

Though communism has been repudiated more spontaneously and decisively in Eastern Europe than fascism was in the West after the war, Bauman still concludes, 'It is up to the socialist counter-culture to make sure that the emancipatory potential of post-modern values comes true...' Is this not to persist in error, like the neo-Nazis in Germany, who believe that even if Hitler could not pull it off last time, it is still worth a try?

Do we need a socialist counter-culture in the post-modern world? After all, who said history repeats itself – once as tragedy and then as farce?●

JB Da Silva, Surrey

## Feminist Realities

Lucky Sarah Mower (MT, February), to be able to see feminism as just a part of growing up, a girls' adventure to be regarded with smug complacency in later years.

Her article displays little understanding of the very real struggle most women still face today, enmeshed in a society where patriarchal values constantly force damaging limitations on our lives.

Instead, she presents a highly unconvincing attempt to justify the actions of certain women who are prepared and determined to succeed at the expense of the majority of their sex.

Mower is right when she argues that the betrayal of women cannot all be blamed on patriarchy. Women who consciously collude in the oppression and exploitation of other women must themselves share the blame and responsibility.

Such women should not be regarded as 'real' feminists or role models. Nor should feminism be viewed as a triumph if it maintains the exploitation of one group of women by another.●

Carol Willard, East Sussex

## Complacent Analysis

Andrew Neil is mistaken (MT Mar) if he thinks that, 'the British people resisted a large part of the Thatcher agenda because it involves making life tough for people, and this is a country of complacent paralysis.'

The millions who voluntarily give their time and efforts to serve their community is proof of their lack of complacency in the face of government underfunding and neglect. In fact, the British people have resisted a large part of Thatcherism because it springs from a brutal philosophy which asserts that 'there is no such thing as society'. Such a philosophy with its emphasis on selfish individualism is alien and morally repugnant to them, and therefore they reject it.●

EM Passes, London

## False Impression

If someone sold me dogfood instead of steak I would complain. Similarly I am annoyed when I open a magazine called *Marxism Today* and read on the first page a leader rubbishing marxism. I suggest a change of name to avoid offences under the Trades Descriptions Act.●

John Shaw, Battersea



Cartoon: Nick Newman

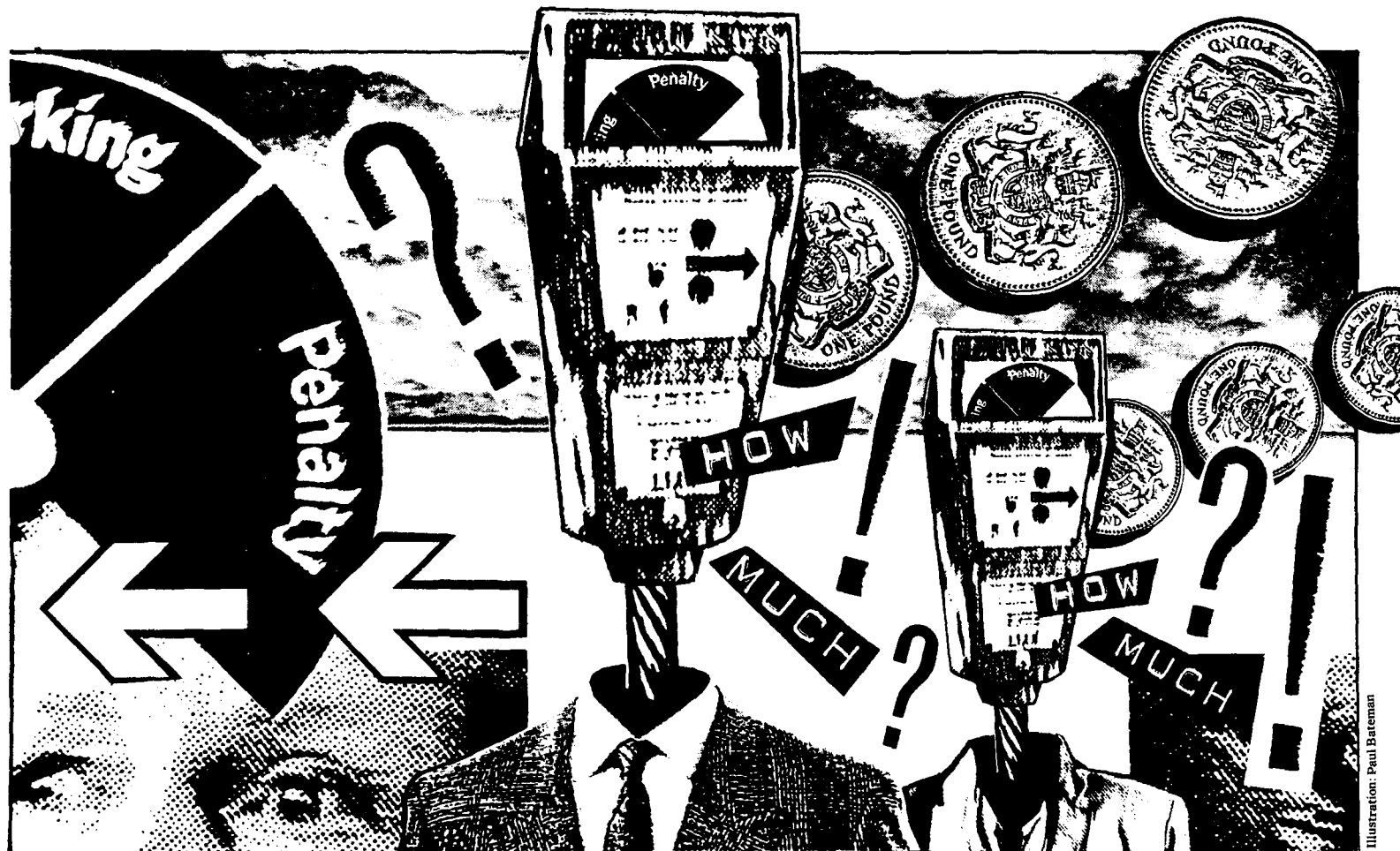


Illustration: Paul Bateman

# Poll Tax Troubles Blue Blooded Revolt

The government is in deep trouble. The poll tax has become a powerful focus for popular discontent and Labour is in confident mood.

**Andrew Gamble**  
examines the Tories'  
plight

**T**he decision to reform local taxation by introducing a new community charge, the poll tax, may prove critical for the survival of this government and the Thatcherite project. When it was first announced, it was part of a series of measures designed to seize back the political initiatives and renew the radical momentum of the Thatcher government in its third term.

It fulfilled the prime minister's longstanding ambition to get rid of the rates, which had become such an unpopular tax because of their visibility and anomalies. It also offered a way of curbing local authority spending by forcing councils to raise the finance for extra spending directly from individual poll-tax payers. It was meant to be popular.

From the beginning, many Conservatives considered the community charge to be a policy of high risk and dubious political advantage. Their worst fears have now been realised. The tax has erupted with explosive force into the political arena. When Conservative councillors start resigning the party whip, the earth is beginning to move.

Taxes are always difficult for governments to manage, as they are a natural focus of popular resentment and resistance. But once established, taxes gain acceptance through inertia and familiarity. Introducing a new tax, however, can be fraught with political danger, especially when the losers from the change outnumber the gainers. Issues of taxation are never simply administrative questions. They also con-

cern the legitimacy of a political order and its capacity to survive. A government that cannot collect taxes soon ceases to be a government.

The full magnitude of the disaster now engulfing the Conservatives has unfolded only slowly. They have had opportunities to rethink and to postpone the implementation of the tax. But the warning signs have been disregarded. The Thatcher government has often been pragmatic in its policies and has backed down when it judged the time not to be ripe for pursuing them. This has not happened with the poll tax. Despite the political damage the poll tax has done in Scotland, not just to the Conservative cause but to the legitimacy of the Union, the government has not been deflected from its path.

The introduction of the poll tax in England and Wales has coincided with a severe bout of mid-term unpopularity for the government, brought on by the impact of some of its other policies, in particular the performance of the economy. The poll tax has become a focus for widespread discontent with the current style and policies of the Conservatives, both inside the party and among voters.

**With the Conservatives in disarray, Labour** is now achieving opinion-poll ratings as high as it has ever achieved since opinion polling began in the 1940s. It is reaching 50-52% on some polls and may yet go higher. The Conservatives have begun to fall sharply and the other parties remain flat. Labour has consequently begun to register leads of 19-20%. These are approaching the highest

leads registered by an opposition party in any parliament since 1945.

Many Conservatives and commentators remain sceptical as to whether a permanent shift in voting intention is taking place. The odds against Labour winning next time are still stacked quite high. To form a majority government after the next election Labour has to win more seats than it has ever won before; it has to achieve a higher swing than it has ever achieved before, and it has to win a large number of constituencies in places where at the last election it did not even gain second place. The Conservatives enjoy all the advantages of an incumbent government, including news management and the timing of the election. Given reasonable luck with the economic cycle they should be able to bring down interest rates during 1991 and allow some expansion of demand and living standards for the necessary six to nine months before the election which must be held by June 1992. On most observers' calculations the Conservatives will be very hard to dislodge.

The party leadership is currently working very hard to persuade its MPs that the furore over the poll tax will blow itself out. Bad by-election and local election results in mid-term are only to be expected. The party has plenty of time to recover. Despite its face-lift, Labour is not a serious alternative and its inadequacies will be exposed at the time of the next election. By that time the row over the poll tax will be forgotten and the election will be fought on the issue of which party is most competent to manage the economy.

Many Conservatives are, however, coming to think this attitude far too complacent. The poll tax may be a different kind of issue – one that has the capacity to inflict lasting damage upon the Conservative Party and its leader. It has given large numbers of voters reasons for nurturing a strong grievance against the government. The promises that extra concessions will be made next year to cushion the blow are not believed. Poll-tax rebels thought they had extracted major concessions from the government at last October's Conservative Party Conference. These concessions, however, have not prevented the fiasco this spring.

Most Tory MPs still declare themselves in favour of the principle of the tax but grumble about how it has been implemented. Voters are blaming the government for the high levels of the tax, which on average are 33% above government estimates of what councils should charge. Ministers argue that the high rates of poll tax should be blamed on overspending by local councils. So far, the electorate refuses to see it this way.

**The difficulties the Conservatives are experiencing with the poll tax are not accidental. They are difficulties inherent in the Thatcherite project itself, a project now looking rather beleaguered. The poll tax is an ambitious**

piece of Thatcherite social engineering. It seeks to promote the cause of popular capitalism while ensuring that local government expenditure is brought under much stricter central control. The Thatcher government's policy towards local authorities has been complicated by the conflict between the Conservatives' traditional reputation as the party that defends local autonomy against the centre, and its objective of maintaining strict central control over public expenditure.

**L**ike all governments, the Thatcher government found that in practice it had to encroach on local autonomy in order to restrain public spending. In its first 10 years it succeeded in reducing the proportion of local government finance provided directly by the central exchequer from 69% to 50%. But direct control over how the money was spent remained with local authorities, which had their own electoral priorities.

Local authorities tried to preserve their spending programmes from central government cuts by raising the rates, the one source of revenue under their control. The Thatcher government responded by imposing penalties on errant councils and by placing ceilings on the amount by which rates could be increased (rate-capping).

The intensity of this conflict through the 1980s made the government search for alternative ways of controlling spending. The idea of replacing the rates by an individual community charge and a uniform business rate appeared to offer a way of reducing the burden of local taxation on many businesses and making local councils more accountable to their electorates. The government also expected that it would impose greater restraint on local spending than central controls had achieved because every extra pound above government guidelines which a council wished to spend would have to be raised from personal poll-tax payers.

Ministers argued that in many areas the rates were only paid by a minority of ratepayers and that an unfair burden fell on local business and the upper-income groups, as well as single parents and elderly people living alone. They had to finance the services which the local electorate was demanding through the ballot box. But many of the local electorate paid nothing directly towards the cost.

The community charge was therefore designed not simply to raise taxes towards the cost of local services, but to help restructure local government to make it much more accountable to its electorate and therefore much more likely to restrain spending.

**In practice this objective was fatally compromised, because local authorities were still expected to be the agents of central government, and received the bulk of their income from the central exchequer. A radical solution would have been to transfer several major**

items of local government expenditure, such as education, to Whitehall. What was left under local government control could then be financed predominantly by poll tax. There would be a clear link between what a council spent and the poll tax it charged.

No such clarity exists in the present arrangements. The government has been obliged to announce a range of rebates to cushion low-income earners, a safety net to protect authorities with high levels of need, as well as threatening to place a limit on councils that set a community charge too far above government guidelines. The tax is harder to collect than the rates and more expensive to administer. In its first year it is producing higher government spending and a higher tax burden without any increase in accountability.

Ministers say that local councils should reduce their spending. Their problem is that Conservative councils have raised their spending almost as much as Labour councils, well above government estimates of what they should spend. For the community charge to succeed, the government needs a hundred Wandsworths, Westminster and Bradfords. At the moment these three model Thatcherite councils are rather isolated. Most other Conservative councils remain stubbornly attached to the idea that they are supposed to be providing public services rather than presiding over the sale of council assets and the privatisation of council services.

As in other areas, the Thatcherite project has run ahead of itself. The objectives are plain, but the political instruments and agencies for achieving them do not yet exist. Community charge is intended to push a great many more councils into programmes of privatisation in order to avoid large increases in community charge. But most councils are maintaining their spending, setting an appropriate rate for community charge, and blaming the government.

**T**he government hopes that eventually, as more and more schools opt out of local government control, and as more local authority services are privatised, a point will be reached where the community charge becomes a small residual charge for those services which are still contracted through the public sector. The difficulty is that the government has to face an election in the middle of this process of transition.

The community charge is causing such disquiet among Conservatives not only because of its implications for local government, but also because of its implications for Conservative electoral strategy. The objective behind the charge is that all individuals should be independent, self-reliant and equal before the law. In principle everyone should make the same contribution towards the services they receive. This egalitarian vision of a nation of citizens cuts right across not only the collectivist values which became so firmly en-

**'Heseltine will have to decide whether a challenge this autumn could succeed. If he fails he might not get a second chance'**



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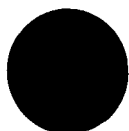
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**'A radical solution would have been to transfer several major items of local government expenditure, such as education, to Whitehall'**



## Trends

### Voting Intentions

(% support, Jan 89-Mar 90)

|              | Jan 89 | Jun 89 | Oct 89 | Jan 90 | Feb 90 | Mar 90 |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Conservative | 45     | 40     | 36     | 38     | 36     | 29     |
| Labour       | 36     | 42     | 46     | 45     | 45     | 52     |

### Satisfaction with the government

(%) Jan 89 - Mar 90

|                        | Jan 89 | Jun 89 | Oct 89 | Jan 90 | Feb 90 | Mar 90 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Satisfied              | 35     | 30     | 22     | 27     | 21     | 17     |
| Dissatisfied           | 44     | 50     | 59     | 53     | 60     | 69     |
| Neither/<br>Don't know | 21     | 21     | 19     | 20     | 20     | 15     |

### Satisfaction with Mrs Thatcher

(%) Jan 89 - Mar 90

|                        | Jan 89 | Jun 89 | Oct 89 | Jan 90 | Feb 90 | Mar 90 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Satisfied              | 45     | 38     | 32     | 32     | 28     | 21     |
| Dissatisfied           | 39     | 48     | 55     | 53     | 57     | 67     |
| Neither/<br>Don't know | 15     | 13     | 13     | 14     | 15     | 12     |

Survey figures from NOP

trenched in the reforms of the 1940s, but also the values of paternalist One Nation Toryism.

Many Conservatives still think that the burden of taxation should be related to the amount that individuals are able to pay. The Thatcherites want to deny it. They see no argument in favour of progressive taxation. In principle everyone should be taxed equally for the services the state provides, locally or nationally.

**S**uch radicalism is deeply unwelcome to many Conservatives. They believe that great wealth imposes great obligations. They argue that it is unfair that a person living in a mansion should pay the same as someone living in a cottage. They feel that some redistribution is desirable and expedient to maintain a social order in which there are reciprocal rights and duties.

The community charge is potentially so serious for the Conservatives because it strikes at one of the pillars of traditional Conservative support. It drives a wedge between rich Tories and poor Tories. Its message is uncompromising. Individual self-reliance, not social paternalism, is the Conservatism of the future. Nobody should vote Conservative out of deference, or traditional loyalty to the old established elite, but only out of regard to their self-interest and the interest of their families.

This message is particularly hard to digest in many rural constituencies, where Conservative voting is often an expression of a traditional political identity. The ideas behind the community charge are an affront to that, and are instinctively resisted by many Tories,

who do not wish to see the break-up of their traditional cross-class electoral coalition. Thatcherism offers no such guarantees.

In this respect, as in so many others, the Thatcherite project reveals its radical and subversive potential. Its practical achievements are often much more limited than its rhetoric suggests. But its capacity for forcing individuals to reassess their values and priorities remains powerful. Its instinct to reorganise extends into many institutions, including the Conservative Party.

The danger of the project overreaching itself, however, is always present. The community charge threatens not only to lose the Conservatives support among traditional Conservative voters, but even more seriously among large parts of the working class only recently attracted to the Conservative fold. Skilled workers, who voted in such large numbers for the Conservatives in 1979, 1983 and 1987, will be particularly hit by the community charge, as they will not qualify for rebates, will tend not to live in large houses, and in many cases will have more than two adults per household.

**Brian Walden once urged the prime minister to ask herself each morning, 'What have I done for the C2s today?' if she wished to keep winning elections. The community charge, especially when coupled to very high interest rates, not only does nothing for skilled workers - it directly penalises them.**

An electoral collapse of serious proportions now confronts the Tories. Blaming Labour for violent poll-tax demonstrations in the inner cities will

not convince many voters to return to the Conservatives. As the implementation of the poll tax proceeds there will be constant reminders of its injustices and anomalies, as individuals are pursued through the courts for non-payment. In Scotland there may be as many as 700,000 non-payers. The degree of bitterness and resentment which the tax is likely to stir up will continue to inflict damage upon the party and upon Margaret Thatcher.

**F**or in the end it is her tax and her policy. Community charge symbolises so much what she herself stands for and wants to achieve. It is not just another policy that can be discarded. It is the symbol of the Thatcherite revolution. She has no choice but to stick with it.

Will the party stick with her? They have only recently voted to let her continue. Sir Anthony Meyer's challenge last December was easily contained. Most MPs seem to have accepted that she would lead them into the next election and retire shortly after it. The impact of the poll tax has begun to change the mood, but Thatcher still has strong support and until recently there has been no clear successor.

This is now changing. In the present crisis, Michael Heseltine has suddenly emerged as an alternative leader, with his own programme and electoral appeal. He is now the best-placed to inherit the leadership, but he would find it much easier to do so if Thatcher could be persuaded to step down and allow an open contest. There is no sign at all that she can be so persuaded. Heseltine will therefore have to decide whether a challenge this autumn could succeed. If he fails he might not get a second chance. But if he were to succeed he might find himself leading a very divided party, with a Thatcherite wing which might refuse to be reconciled to his leadership.

The caution of the Conservatives, their instinct to preserve unity, and the short time before the next election all make a leadership change before then unlikely. But the pace at which discontent with the government is growing could change that.

The leadership change, when it comes, will help determine the future direction of the party and the future of the Thatcherite project. The attraction of Heseltine to many Conservatives is that he offers not only their best prospect of staving off a Conservative defeat at the next election, but also of preserving the key gains of the Thatcher years in a new political project that recognises the different international and domestic agenda of the 1990s. Heseltine would pursue a different policy towards the EC and would develop a new industrial strategy based on partnership between the public and private sectors. The problem for the Conservative Party is that many Thatcherites would rather see Neil Kinnock as prime minister than entrust the future of Thatcherism to Michael Heseltine.●

# Poll Tax Troubles Lessons For The Locals

Relations between central and local government have long been fraught with tension, as **Alan Alexander** explains

**T**he Conservative government's crisis over the poll tax brings into sharp relief tensions in the relationship between central and local government. It would be a mistake, however, to see the tax and the intense problems of implementation, first in Scotland, and then in England and Wales, as a political issue separate from the historic development of that relationship. Rather it has been the most dramatic outcome of a process that has been underway since the end of the second world war.

It is important also to examine the Tories' crisis in the context of what the choice of a local tax system says about national politicians' views of local government and local democracy. A good local tax should support local democracy and promote local autonomy, so it should have four attributes: it should be cheap to collect; it should be difficult to evade; it should be naturally buoyant, ie, the amount collected should increase without having to raise the rate of tax; and it should be comprehensible.

Income tax performs tolerably well on all these criteria. So also did the rates, although their buoyancy was continuously and seriously undermined by the failure of successive governments to reassess regularly the property values upon which the tax rate was levied.

For 30 years after 1945, local public

spending grew continuously, funded by a combination of local revenue raised from the rates and generous grants from the exchequer, ultimately through the mechanism of a 'rate support grant'. It is often argued that this system, by relying on autonomous local tax and a grant that did not specify how local councils should spend the money they received from the centre, defended the principle and practice of local democracy, while allowing the government to influence the overall total of local spending. In reality, the consensus over the importance of local public services and the commitment of successive governments, both Labour and Conservative, to support them ensured that the tensions inherent in the central-local relationship were relieved by the continuous application of money raised by national rather than local taxation.

**The current conventional wisdom that the rates had become so unpopular, that their abolition was inevitable, developed relatively recently: about the time that the postwar consensus over the role of government in the United Kingdom began to collapse under the pressure of the oil shock and the inflation that followed it. For at that time, concern about the level of public expenditure began to take precedence over a concern for the quality of public services.**

Until the election of the first majority

Labour government in 1945, local government, though granted most of its powers by parliament, was regarded as autonomous within its own sphere of operation. Local authorities were empowered by national legislation to design and provide services to their communities. National power was used sparingly. Dramatic interventions – as when Labour councillors in Poplar were prosecuted over the administration of poor relief – were rare and confined to issues where the actions of local authorities were unlawful rather than simply politically unpalatable. In times of economic or fiscal crisis, such as the aftermath of the fall of the Labour government in 1931, national pressure on local expenditure was based upon general exhortation rather than specific intervention.

**T**he decisive change of direction in central-local relations come with the general election of 1945, when Labour adopted a new national view of local government. In its manifesto, Labour acknowledged that if the welfare state were to be established and social justice ensured, the role of local authorities would be crucial to the process of implementation. This view was consistent with the radicalism of the programme and commanded very wide support; but in taking it Labour moved from the acceptance of autonomous local government to the assertion of instrumental local government. This change meant that henceforth the value of local government would be judged by its capacity to deliver services promised and specified by national politicians.

Thus, where the judgment was that local institutions were not capable of administering a national service, new institutions were created, as in the case of the National Health Service and the nationalisation of municipal utilities, both of which removed powers from local councils. Where the government's objectives could be met through local implementation – housing, education, social services, planning – their achievement was generously funded by the exchequer. This diminished local autonomy, weakened local democracy and increased centralisation. However, it also led to the improved services that were the justification for the welfare state and so changes to the texture of central-local relations were accepted or simply ignored.

The period of 'positive instrumentalism' lasted until the mid-1970s. It could survive neither the collapse of the postwar consensus on the value of public expenditure nor the perceived need for austerity created by the inflation of the early 1970s. It was succeeded by a more negative relationship in which central government sought to use its influence on and partial control over local authorities to reduce the amount spent on local public services.

This move from positive to negative instrumentalism meant that the inherent tensions would begin to dominate the central-local relationship. National

## Tax Fax

Government estimate of total council spending (England and Wales) 1990/91 **£50 billion**  
 Likely actual total of budgeted council spending 1990/91 **£53 billion**  
 Government target for national average poll tax **£278**  
 Estimated actual national average poll tax set **£365**  
 Highest poll tax set so far London Borough of Haringey (Labour) **£572**  
 Lowest poll tax set London Borough of Wandsworth (Conservative) **£148**  
 Average poll tax set by Conservative councils (175 authorities) **£345**  
 Average for Labour councils (116 authorities) **£367**

Percentage overspend above government targets:  
 Conservative councils **31%**  
 Labour councils **35%**  
 SLD councils **36%**  
 Independent councils **36%**

Average rate level (England & Wales) 1989/90 **£274**  
 Likely average extra cost this year to each household over their last rates bill **£170**

### The Scottish Experience

Average poll tax in 1989/90 **£301**  
 Average set for 1990/91 **£328**  
 Estimated non-payment for 1989/90 **15-20%** of Scottish population

So far, over 800,000 people have 'defaulted', ie, are in excess of three months in arrears or liable to be served with a warrant for non-payment  
 Estimated non-payment in Glasgow **1 in 3**  
 That is **146,000 defaulters**

Strathclyde Regional Council has 1,793,000 poll tax payers. The council makes 70,000 amendments a month to their register. They have employed 630 extra employees and 450 new computers to administer the tax. They estimate their additional running costs to be £13m.

policies became dominated by the 'need' to control public expenditure. Pressure on local-authority budgets increased continuously through the period of the 1974-79 Labour government. The national total of local spending was squeezed by progressive reductions in central financial support. Councils which resisted could continue to finance local services only by raising rate levels and these levels were applied to a tax base which had lost much of its buoyancy because there had been no revaluation since 1973.

With the election of the Thatcher government in 1979, ministers found it easy to deploy the central-local relationship that had developed under Labour, in the pursuit of other political objectives. There was a continuing concern with the level of public expenditure, but it was supplemented by an intention to 'roll back the state'.

The government's motives were based on a number of untested and unproven assumptions: that public provision was inherently profligate; that, in particular, local authorities provided low-quality services that people did not need or, if they did, that they should provide for themselves; that expenditure on public resources diverted resources from private enterprise. Because local government delivered the most labour-intensive services, its call on

resources was particularly heavy and so it was essential to constrain further its expenditure. In an effort to be selective and so concentrate pressure on high-spending Labour authorities, the government began to intervene directly in the affairs of individual councils, first by manipulation of grant and then by rate-capping, justifying its actions in terms of the need for economy and efficiency.

**S**elective intervention was also justified by the need to compensate for the lack of accountability in the local tax system. Because of the failure to re-value and the lack of buoyancy that resulted, the impact of the rates had to be cumulatively modified. This was done by rebates to people on low incomes and the payment through the rate support grant of a subsidy to all domestic ratepayers.

The effect was to change the balance between the proportion of local revenues raised from individuals and that paid by business and industry. Ministers argued, or rather implied, that this lack of accountability arose from the political decision of Labour councils to maintain the level of local services in the knowledge that the bulk of the costs would fall on business rather than on the individual ratepayer. In fact, it was an inevitable result of the degradation of the rating system, compounded by changes

to the central grant.

There was no doubt about the growing unpopularity of the rates. Those who were not entitled to rebates were faced with higher bills. Those who were, could be said to be insulated from the costs of local services. Few people understood the link between rate levels and the cost and quality of local services. The methods of distribution of central grant had become more concerned with the pursuit of the centre's political objectives than with supporting services or promoting local autonomy.

**All these forces came together with the rating revaluation in Scotland of 1984.** An attempt to deal with the degradation of the rating system after a period of rapid inflation produced dramatic increases in tax liability and instant furor. It became politically urgent to implement the longstanding commitment, first made by the Conservatives in 1974, to abolish the domestic rates. The promise to do so applied first to Scotland, but it was clear that it would soon be applied to the rest of Britain.

The emphasis had shifted decisively from a concern with service levels and aggregate expenditure to a concern with accountability and the expenditure of individual authorities. In the Tory lexicon, for 'accountability' read 'pressure to reduce public expenditure' especially where it was seen to be borne, disproportionately and unfairly, by Conservative supporters. For there was in the rating system a rough and ready redistributive element that the Thatcher government found unacceptable.

If the political objective was to reduce public expenditure by increasing the accountability of local decision-makers, then the poll tax was seen to be ideal: bringing directly into the tax net those whom the Tories saw as contributing too little and gaining too much under the rates. If it could be combined with the removal from local government of the power to tax the business sector it could also be argued to bear directly on the problem of diverting to public services resources needed by private enterprise.

If it had been left at that, it might have worked. But a fear that Labour councils would continue to provide a high level of services and retain the support of the taxpayers, led the government to modify the tax in an effort to protect taxpayers from the initial impact. Central grant was manipulated; rates of tax were modified by a complex and apparently random system; and it seemed clear that ministers would intervene to limit the tax rates of individual councils. All these modifications undermined the one alleged strength of the tax – its capacity to increase local accountability.

Thus the government was faced with the shambles of implementation. Arguably, given its history, no other outcome was possible, following as it did from a view of local government that ensured the introduction of a tax with none of the essential attributes of a good local tax.●

**'There was in the rating system a rough and ready redistributive element that the Thatcher government found unacceptable'**



# Promised Land?

The headlong rush towards the unification of Germany has aroused mixed emotions in many parts of Europe. Hope is tinged with old fears. Could history repeat itself? **Richard Evans** analyses the phenomenon of German nationalism

**G**erman reunification is causing a lot of anxiety in the world. The sight of vast crowds in Leipzig waving the national flag and roaring for 'Deutschland, einig Vaterland!' – 'Germany, united fatherland!' – awakens uncomfortable memories of the nationalist enthusiasms of the past. Chancellor Kohl's evident reluctance to acknowledge the validity of the present Polish-German border, the Oder-Neisse line, until forced to by his liberal coalition partners and by hostile international opinion has aroused the suspicion that a united Germany might look for territorial gains in the East, at a time when an economically shattered country such as Poland hardly seems in a position to resist whatever pressure the new colossus in central Europe might bring to bear. National feeling is reviving all over central and Eastern Europe, and the violence to which it has already given rise in a number of areas, from Azerbaijan to Bulgaria, is grimly suggestive of the emotive power which nationalism still possesses as the 20th century draws to a close.

And there can surely be no doubt any more of the strength and resilience of feelings of national identity in Germany itself. Only a couple of years ago, observers were proclaiming Germany to be a 'post-national' society, where local and regional identities and a general feeling of being European had largely superseded the national identification of the past. Opinion polls showed that only a minority of West Germans were proud of being German, in stark contrast to the strong feelings of national pride recorded by the pollsters in Britain or, still more, the USA. West German conservatives were lamenting the

loss of national identity and orientation among the populace and trying to revive it by arguing for a more positive attitude towards the German past. The question of reunification figured well down the list of political issues which West Germans identified as urgent or important.

In the East, the Honecker regime was busy trying to create a separate sense of national identity through inventing a separate historical tradition for the regions which it occupied. Martin Luther, who was the subject of massive anniversary celebrations in 1983, Prussian heroes such as Frederick the Great, whose statue was reinstated on East Berlin's main boulevard, the Unter den Linden, and even Bismarck, the subject of a major, and surprisingly conventional, biography by a leading East German a couple of years ago, were retrospectively turned into East Germans by virtue of the fact that they had lived or worked in areas subsequently occupied by the territory of the GDR. Popular identification with the country was supposed to be cemented by the massive investment in sporting prowess that earned East Germans so many Olympic medals in the Honecker years. And when the revolution began, last October and November, opposition groups such as the New Forum seemed clear that what they wanted was the democratisation of their own country, not unification with another.

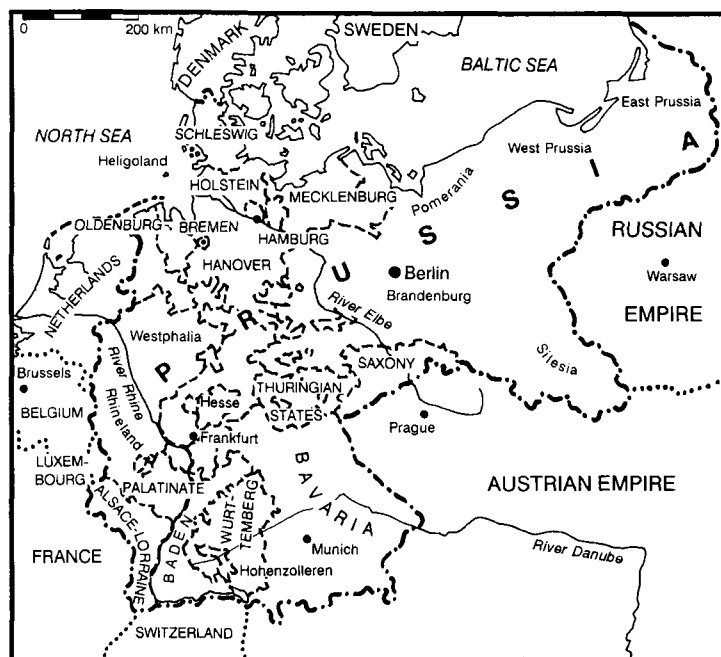
How illusory all that seems now! All Honecker's commemorations of historical figures like Luther seems to have done is to reinforce a sense of shared cultural heritage with the rest of Germany. And attitudes to the GDR's sporting heroes seems to have varied between sympathy at the regime of drug-

taking to which so many of them were made to submit, to resentment at the extensive privileges which this enabled them to enjoy. Observers were not wholly wrong to recognise a sense of a separate identity among East Germans, but in retrospect it is clear that it ran no more than skin deep. Already in 1989 a third of a million East Germans left for the West; and in 1990 emigration has so far been running at around 60,000 people a month, a rate that, if sustained to the end of the year, would mean that roughly a million people, or one-sixteenth of the entire population, will have crossed the border to settle in the Federal Republic in the space of 24 months. An even larger number of ethnic Germans – over 370,000 – emigrated to West Germany from other parts of Eastern Europe in 1989, and this wave of migration is continuing too. Clearly there is a powerful sense of national identity at work: it is, after all, *Germany* they are going to live in, not Austria or Switzerland or the European Community.

Yet it would be wrong to see this undoubted sense of national identity as a simple gut feeling of ethnicity. Far from being innate or unchanging, national feeling has been historically mutable and contingent. And of nowhere has this been more true than of Germany. Different variants and traditions of German nationalism have long existed side by side and come to the fore at various different conjunctures. While they have always overlapped, they have seldom been identical. Cultural nationalism, economic nationalism and political nationalism have had widely varying implications in Germany over the past two centuries. Political nationalism itself has found many competing forms, varying from ultra-liberal to extreme reactionary. The Nazi or pan-German variant that reached its apogee under Hitler has been only one of these. Moreover, even the definition of who is German has changed over time and been a matter of frequent dispute among nationalists.

**S**o it would be a mistake to regard those powerful images of German nationalism which the newsreel propaganda of the Nazi era has stamped on the international public memory as accurate representations of reality. After all, one of the most memorable of such images was that of the cheering crowds who greeted Hitler as he drove into Austria after the *Anschluss* of 1938. At that time, certainly, a great many Austrians did consider themselves German and welcomed their incorporation into the Reich, even if those who disagreed with this view stayed at home. Yet scarcely anyone would now suggest that German reunification should include Austria, despite the fact that, historically speaking, Austria did form part of the German Confederation from 1815 to 1866 and before that part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, as it was called. The long tradition of a 'big German' sense of national identity,

## Unification Of Germany, 1871



The outer dotted line indicates the border of Germany after the Franco-Prussian War 1870-1. It shows the newly unified Germany as made up of many different states.

## The Two Germanys, 1990



The map shows the borders of West and East Germany, including the Oder-Neisse Line between East Germany and Poland. The shaded parts of Poland and the USSR are those which the far Right in Germany wants to recover.

including Austria, came to an end during and after the second world war.

But the idea of German national identity has been historically contingent and mutable in other ways too. In literature, culture and the arts, for example, it may still be said to move rather freely across national political boundaries. A conductor like Herbert von Karajan was

equally at home in Berlin and Salzburg, a writer like Peter Handke is not merely Austrian, any more that a playwright like Max Frisch is primarily Swiss. That is not to deny, of course, that the literary and artistic culture of a country such as Austria has its own individuality, especially when it turns, as for example in the work of Thomas Bernhard, in a political direction. But it is

clearly the case that in a wider sense the German-speaking countries continue to share a common cultural heritage and a common cultural context, even where – as in East Germany until very recently – this has been grossly deformed by the pressures of political and ideological censorship and indoctrination. This has as few implications for a political sense of identity, however, as the common cultural heritage of the English-speaking nations does.

Yet the political resonances of a shared culture in this sense were of profound importance to the emergent nationalist movement of the early-19th century. As the culminating point of that movement showed, in the revolution of 1848, German nationalism was initially a radical and progressive phenomenon. Feudalism, serfdom, the denial of civil liberties to minorities such as the Jews, censorship, the police state, the refusal to contemplate free elections and parliamentary rule – all these were associated with the 40-odd individual and autonomous states, ranging from Austria and Prussia at one extreme to Mecklenburg and Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt at the other, into which the German Confederation was divided. Abolishing them all and creating a unitary national state with a single, sovereign parliament seemed the quickest way to gain the classic freedoms which the men of 1848 were so committed to winning for the German people. Marx and Engels, too, saw a unified nation as the essential basis for historical progress at this time.

It was only with the political failure of the 1848 revolution and the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership, achieved by Bismarck's wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870-71, that German nationalism began to take on a different character. Of course, liberal nationalism did not die immediately; and the 1870s in particular saw a number of important liberal reforms which had been undoubtedly made easier by the achievement of unification. But as time went on, both Bismarck and the liberal nationalists began to look for the consolidation of national unity through the suppression of the alleged 'enemies of the Reich' within the new German Empire. In the 1870s Germany's large Catholic minority, mostly concentrated in parts of Germany which had fought on the Austrian side against Prussia in 1866, was subjected to harsh measures of discrimination during the so-called *Kulturkampf*. In 1878 it was the turn of the socialist labour movement, and even after the lifting of the formal ban on its organisations in 1890, it continued to be subject to police harassment, prosecution and censorship. By this time the national minorities which lived within Germany's borders, most notably the Poles, were also falling victim to the Germanising zeal of the authorities, backed up by the nationalist wings of the liberals.

German nationalism's move from left

**'Only a couple of years ago, observers were proclaiming Germany to be a "post-national" society'**

to right was completed around the turn of the century by the emergence of two new factors. First, the military might behind the creation of the German Empire under Bismarck was transformed into a bid for world-power status, backed by the construction of a big navy; and secondly, state nationalism began to be outflanked by a new, populist nationalism, fuelled by petty-bourgeois resentments and strongly coloured by anti-semitism. The most radical of the new nationalists regarded the work of unification as incomplete, and pointed to the many millions of Germans living outside the boundaries of the Reich, in Eastern Europe. Here it was not so much cultural nationalism as racism that provided the impulse behind this 'pan-German' programme for the eastern extension of Germany's boundaries.

Pan-Germanism remained a minority current before 1914. It was after the war that the real radicalisation of German nationalism took place. With the rise of the Nazi Party came the assertion of the view, held only by a tiny minority of pan-Germans before 1914, that the Germans were a superior race whose destiny lay in uniting themselves in a huge central European empire where they would dominate and enslave millions of supposedly inferior races such as the Slavs. These beliefs, fed by a growing quantity of historical and scientific, or pseudo-historical and pseudo-scientific, publications on the historic mission of the Germans and the eugenic inferiority of Poles, Russians and Jews, found their most terrible expression in the war of conquest and extermination launched by Hitler against the East in 1941.

It was the unfolding of this last and most radical transformation of political nationalism in Germany that provided the essential precondition for the dismemberment of the Reich after the war. The boundaries existing in 1937, before Hitler began his wars of conquest and annexation, were drastically revised and many areas of eastern Germany then inside the Reich were taken over by Poland and the Soviet Union. Some 11m ethnic Germans fled to the West or were brutally expelled, with severe loss of life. In retrospect, this flood of German refugees and expellees was the first, and by far the most dramatic, act in a process of concentrating the Germans within a single set of state boundaries that has re-emerged in the last couple of years with the renewed influx of ethnic German refugees from Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union. Whereas pan-German and Nazi notions of national identity meant, among other things, *extending* Germany's state boundaries to cover major areas of German (and Slav) settlements in the East, the predominant postwar notion of national identity has meant the opposite: bringing Germans from those areas back into the much-diminished boundaries of the German state as it now exists.

**'The real force undermining the viability of East Germany as an independent state has been economic'**



Relatively few ethnic Germans now remain in the East. The thorough and long-established integration of the first, postwar wave of refugees and expellees into the West makes it seem unlikely that there would be much support for a revival of pan-German annexationism. But the reunification of East and West Germany is a rather different matter. Although, obviously, the division of Germany into zones of occupation in 1945 would never have happened but for the war started by Hitler in 1939, the hardening of the boundary between the Soviet zone and the three Western zones into a boundary between two separate states was above all the legacy of the cold war. As the cold war ends that legacy is now being liquidated. Despite Chancellor Kohl's hesitations about recognising the Polish-German border established in 1945, however, the likelihood of a united Germany making claims on the territory given by international agreement to Poland seems relatively remote. Both internal and external political resistance to such an ambition is considerable. In the end, unlike the effects of the cold war, the effects of second world war are simply too profound to be reversed.

**This still leaves us with the question of** what kind of national identity it is that the Germans are now forging for themselves. If radical, pan-German nationalism is now confined to fringe groups of the far Right such as Franz Schönhuber's Republicans, then what kind of nationalism are we dealing with? There is much to be said for taking an optimistic view, and for believing that what we are witnessing is a revival under modern auspices of the liberal nationalism of the 19th century, though largely shorn of its linkage to the idea of a shared literary and linguistic culture. This can be seen in the relinking of the idea of national unity to freedom, civil rights and democracy. It is important in this context to remember where the impulse for change has come from. It has been almost exclusively from the popular revolution in the East, led by young people whose political background is to be found in the opposition movements that were beginning to emerge in the last years of Honecker's rule: in movements centred on the Protestant Church, in demonstrations to change 'swords into ploughshares', in the campaign for non-military alternatives to conscription into the East German People's Army, in the growing protests against the appalling environmental pollution produced by the regime's reckless drive to increase industrial production. The moral outrage that overthrew the Krenz regime and destroyed the East German Communist Party when it was discovered that its leaders, such as Erich Honecker, had been leading a life of luxury while extolling to the people the virtues of socialist equality, derived its cutting edge from the moral, and sometimes religious, imperatives behind these opposition

movements.

The idealism of the youthful revolutionaries in the East is indeed strikingly reminiscent of the idealism of the liberal nationalists of 1848. But as in 1848, this has its problems. For as West German big business muscles in on the East, and as the professional politicians from the Federal Republic move in to dominate the course of events during the election campaign, it is hard not to see the idealists of the New Forum and the other home-grown movements that led the revolution of November and December 1989 as naive amateurs helpless before the realities of power. German unification, after all, is no marriage between equals. One of the two or three richest countries in the world is merging with one of the most crisis-ridden economies in Europe.

What is happening, in fact, is the re-emergence of yet another strand in the complex history of German national identity: economic nationalism. Back in the early 19th century, the emerging middle classes saw economic unification as the essential foundation for industrial growth and prosperity. The famous customs union or *Zollverein* brought the German states together in a single market long before they were politically united. And in the depths of the slump, in 1931, the German and Austrian governments once again saw economic union between the two countries as a way towards economic revival – a plan that was only stopped from becoming reality by the intervention of suspicious Western allies, who feared it would lead soon enough to political union as well.

**F**reedom and democracy were the political imperatives behind the political revolution in East Germany; a sense of national identity with Germans in the West drove on the crowds in Leipzig to raise the demand for reunification; but the real force undermining the viability of East Germany as an independent state has been economic. The more people have fled to the West in search of a better life, the more difficult has become the situation of those who have stayed behind. Factories are losing their skilled workers; hospitals and schools are finding it more and more difficult to provide basic services in the absence of growing numbers of doctors, nurses and teachers; the service and supply sectors are experiencing ever more serious problems in coping. The East German people have seen the affluent style of life available in the West, and they want it for themselves. As the situation in the East has grown more dire by the week, so economic union with the West has come to seem the only way out.

But the irony is that the drive for economic unification has met with an increasingly hostile response from the people of the Federal Republic. It is all very well for people to support the idea of reunification in the abstract, as a principle, and the percentage of West

Germans who have done so, according to the opinion polls, has increased from under half last autumn to 75% by the early spring. But as the real costs of reunification have become steadily more apparent, so West Germans have been turning against the idea in practice. By February 1990, opinion surveys were showing massive majorities against raising West German taxes or cutting wages in order to help the East, while the proportion of those in favour of continuing to admit refugees from the East and paying them full social benefits had dropped to little more than a fifth. The social-democratic politician Oskar Lafontaine was at the time of writing racing ahead of Chancellor Kohl in the opinion polls with his calls for a stop to immigration from the East and a slowing-down of Kohl's headlong drive to reunify.

**N**ational identity is all very well for the West Germans, in other words, as long as it does not mean having to accommodate millions of refugees in their towns and cities or pay out billions of marks to aid the recovery of the East German economy to an extent that people might actually want to stay there. Hostility to Easterners is growing rapidly on the streets and in the pubs and bars of Hamburg, Munich and West Berlin, and it is one of the many ironies of the situation that the far-right, ultra-nationalist Republicans are second to none in their condemnation of the influx.

All of this seems rather a long way from the rabid pan-Germanism that led to the second world war. History, as everyone knows, never really repeats itself, not even the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. Nationalism and national identity are changeable, historically contingent, fractured and un-even phenomena. Being German means different things to different people at different times, just as being British or French does. Many of the social forces that nourished extreme German nationalism in the earlier parts of this century, from a large and resentful Prot-estant peasantry and urban petty-bourgeoisie to a rigidly monarchist and authoritarian aristocracy and military elite, are now vanished or dwindled into insignificance. The seismic shock of total defeat in the second world war has convinced the bulk of the middle classes that political adventurism and foreign expansionism are best avoided. Democracy has brought prosperity, and therefore seems a good thing to most people.

The real issues at stake in Germany are far removed from the kind of historically conditioned anxieties so often expressed outside. How is the exodus from the East to be stopped without serious infringements of human rights? How is the East's economy to be revived without lowering living standards or undermining the costly welfare state in East and West? How are latent antagonisms and social conflicts between

**'The real issues at stake in Germany are far removed from the kind of historically conditioned anxieties so often expressed outside'**



Easterners and Westerners to be avoided? And are the millions of East Germans who supported Chancellor Kohl's line of immediate reunification by voting for the Conservative Alliance in the March 18 elections going to be disappointed if reunification fails to bring the rapid economic benefits that they were looking for and are being promised? Aggressive nationalism has come to the fore in Germany at times of economic crisis and collapse, most notably in the early 1930s, and if the West German economy gets into serious trouble during the process of adjustment, then it may re-emerge. But it is very unlikely to take the kind of shape it had earlier in the century: much more likely, for example, would be a growth in anti-immigrant feeling directed against the large communities of Turks and others who have settled in Germany's major cities. There are no signs that German nationalism is likely to direct itself outwards again. On the contrary, there is a widespread feeling that reunification can only take place within the context of general European co-operation, above all in the European Community.

Events continue to move with such speed that nobody can be really sure what is going to happen next. But historical experience as well as common-sense observation suggests that alarmism is out of place, and a note of cautious optimism would be the most appropriate one to sound. ●

**- c l e s -**

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**The Guardian**

# Russian Roulette

The Soviet economy is in a desperate state. The reforms have conspired only to worsen the situation. **Charlie Leadbeater**, recently returned from Moscow, explores the depth of the crisis and the potential scenarios. What will triumph: Great Russian nationalism or social democracy?

**T**he Soviet Union is engaged in a desperate race between reform and disintegration. The most obvious aspect of the disintegration is the growing nationalist threat to the fabric of the empire. But that is linked to an economic crisis which has been underestimated in the West. The republics seeking independence hope they will be able to exert more control over their economies and escape the crisis. They are unlikely to succeed.

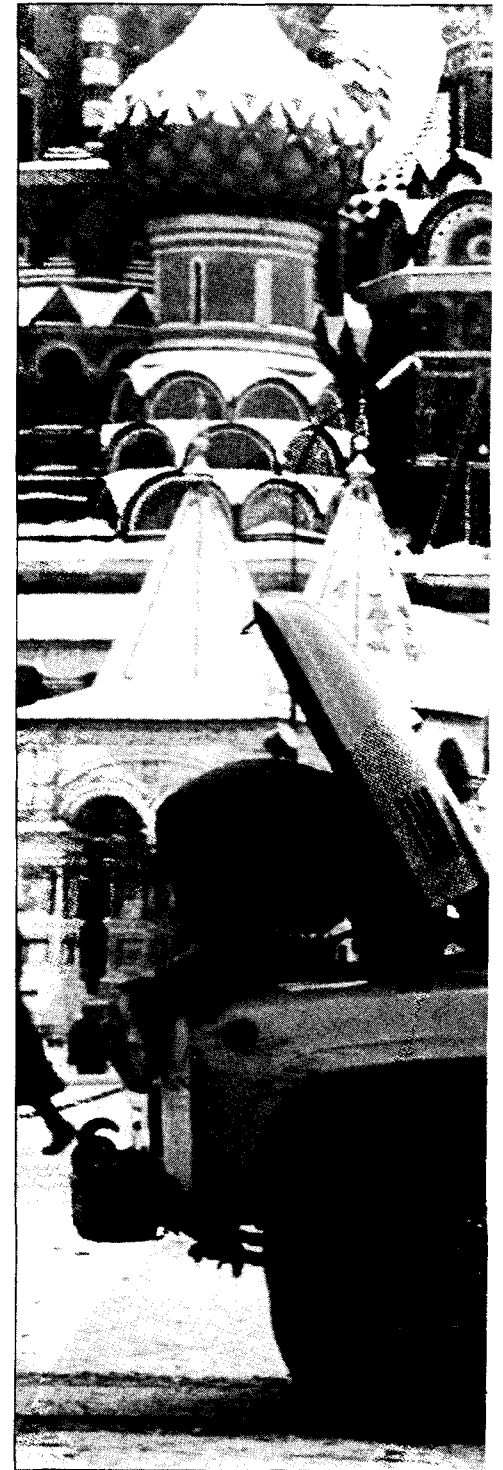
The most obvious symptoms of the economic crisis are the acute shortages of consumer goods. Tales of shortages and queues are familiar clichés of economic inefficiency in the USSR. But the economic life of the ordinary consumer and worker has worsened under perestroika. A recent official survey found that only 106 of almost 1,000 staple goods were in regular supply. The commission for economic reform estimates that for every rouble in circulation there are only 0.18 roubles-worth of goods to buy. Quality has also deteriorated sharply. In 1985 about 900,000 tape recorders a year were returned for repairs during their guarantee period. In 1988 the figure was 1.2m, about a

fifth of annual output.

The growing shortages are not just a symptom of past under-investment and the continuing inefficiency of the planning system. They have been promoted by the reform programme itself. Reform is feeding a crisis of economic discipline, incentive, authority and cohesion. The old planning system has been undermined ideologically and practically but without anything to replace it.

The clearest example is the way that the introduction of self-financing at enterprises has changed the framework they operate within. Enterprises have been given limited freedoms to engage in foreign trade and to keep more of the profits they make from producing above planned levels of output. The trouble is that the Soviet economy is dominated by inefficient monopolies. Indeed its greatest problem is not so much planning of markets but monopolisation. The monopolies have moved quickly to exploit these freedoms.

Partly as a result, the state's ability to maintain discipline in the economy is being undermined. Rumours of enterprises simply refusing to accept unprofitable state orders are rife.



Large suppliers are refusing to supply smaller enterprises whose contracts do not offer sufficiently large profits. Consumer goods producers have switched from making low profitability goods, for instance for children or pensioners, and are exploiting limited pricing freedom for new products to make goods on which they can earn much higher margins. Every enterprise says it wants to expand its sales abroad, to earn foreign currency, exacerbating domestic shortages. Self-financing, thus, has promoted a sort of civil war between ministries, enterprises and their customers.

Neither of the other two main industrial reforms – joint ventures with foreign companies and co-operatives – has helped much to modernise the economy and ease the shortages.

Joint ventures as yet form only a very



**'Increasingly  
the best way  
to get hold  
of a car or  
flat is  
through the  
enterprise  
which  
employs you'**



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thin line of internationalised companies around an economic core that remains largely isolated. Only about 7% of the 1,300-1,400 ventures so far registered are in production. Few of them are engaged in manufacturing. The whole approach to joint ventures, which is being reviewed, is encouraging them to form small industrial islands protected from the economic chaos around them rather than spreading Western management and technology. Sustained foreign investment will probably require the introduction of private property and a convertible rouble to allow companies to repatriate profits.

Co-operatives have provoked widespread hostility. They have acted entirely rationally by filling the most profitable gaps in the market and charging high prices, often in foreign currency.

They have brought little comfort to the average Soviet consumer.

**Reform is undermining what little discipline and authority there was in the economy.** But it has not introduced significant incentives to improve efficiency. Profits are still too limited to offer much of an incentive for innovation or efficiency. Tax rates vary to even out the profitability of different enterprises, with the aim that nobody should go out of business and nobody should make a big profit. Anyway, why bother to invest in improving productivity and quality when there is so much pent-up demand that virtually anything made can be sold?

If the incentives for investment are negligible, the rewards for higher labour productivity are non-existent. Pay

flexibility and differentials are limited. There is widespread criticism of the injustices of wage levelling, which means people get paid very similar salaries for very unequal efforts and skills. But even if people could earn more by working harder it would be virtually worthless. What is the point of earning more roubles if there is nothing to spend them on?

Enterprises are finding a way round this by providing their workers with privileged access to consumer goods at the factory. Increasingly they are giving their workers goods in kind, via plant shops or mail-order catalogues rather than additional wages. Increasingly, the best way to get hold of a car or flat is through the enterprise which employs you. But this means that goods are siphoned off before they reach the

# THE UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF SOCIALISM



The last few weeks have seen the most unacceptable face of socialism imposing itself on the broadest yet opposition to the Tory poll tax. Those who exclude with their violent tactics the former tory-voter, the young mother and her children, the hard-pressed pensioner, the concerned Christian and thousands like them are elitists, not activists.

There is another form of elitism we also have to contend with. It is represented by Labour's retreat into the safety of the opinion polls and has nothing to offer the poll tax protesters except a long wait to the next election.

The democratic revolutions of Eastern Europe have shown us the potential of a politics of active citizenship. The Womens Movement has taught us the subversive power of non-violence. These are the lessons Britain's Communists are learning as we develop a popular, empowering politics of change in the place of the gestures of pseudo-revolutionaries and passive Labourism alike.

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open market and so the shortages worsen.

At the grass roots of the economy, reform is turning into a desperate struggle for survival. Everyone is searching for an escape route from the crisis. Enterprises are seeking to become part of networks of amalgamations, industrial fiefdoms, which can secure supplies for one another and together withstand the gathering chaos. They are also grasping lifelines to the West through joint ventures to keep them afloat.

Consumers are seeking to bypass the core economy through the black market, personal contacts, consumption at the workplace and imports of foreign goods through mail order. Leningrad has just imposed a ban on non-city dwellers from purchasing large amounts of goods in the city. A similar move is also being suggested in an attempt to protect Moscow consumers. Such urban sectarianism is likely to promote resentment in outlying districts without easing shortages of city-dwellers.

The republics are seeking independence to escape the chaos. Even in relatively placid places like Byelorussia there are growing pressures for economic independence. About 80% of the televisions and fridges made in Byelorussia are exported to the rest of the USSR. The Byelorussians have declared that they want to keep all the growth in output over the next few years for their own consumers. Senior officials within the mainstream of the party in the republic warn that if perestroika unravels into economic chaos the republic will have to seek its own solution by orienting itself more towards the West European economies. The Baltic states are looking towards closer links with a united Germany and the Scandinavian states. In the Ukraine, which is the bread basket of the USSR, nationalist economists argue they could prosper by selling to the West rather than feeding the other republics.

Reform is provoking economic and social dislocation. The problem is that worse is sure to come. The economy will only be revitalised with much more far-reaching restructuring which will entail even more social costs, threaten more violent unrest and provoke increasing fragmentation.

Hyper-inflation is waiting in the wings. Most enterprises say they could double or treble their prices. Billions of roubles are sloshing around the economy in personal savings or enterprise accounts. Any swift moves towards an unregulated consumer-goods market and inflation would start to roar through the economy.

Waiting in the wings on the other side of the stage is unemployment. Most enterprises think they could get rid of 20-30% of their workforce. As yet very few enterprises have gone out of business. But they will have to if restructuring is going to work. Senior party economists in Moscow believe that be-

tween 20% and 30% of all enterprises are bankrupt.

The prospect facing the ordinary Soviet worker is this. They have spent years paying for the inefficiencies of the planning system and the ailing monopolies by accepting queues and lower living standards than the West. They are now being asked to pay for their inefficiency again with inflation and unemployment. Restructuring will create a potent mixture of inflation, growing inequality and more poverty. The prospect for the Soviet state is an immense crisis of authority.

**What are the political implications of this economic crisis, which is like a huge centrifuge just starting to whirl into motion? If restructuring is to be carried out successfully the political system needs two central characteristics.**

It must be dynamic. It must recognise the scale of the economic problems and unleash enough energy in society to transform the way the economy works.

And whichever mechanisms are used to restructure the economy, there will be enormous social costs. The political system must be strong enough to ensure that the costs are borne without derailing restructuring, provoking social disorder or threatening the foundations of the political system.

What are the prospects for a political system emerging with this mixture of dynamism and stability? There seem four main options.

The first is a re-Brezhnevisation of the economy. It would be based on a recognition that the main obstacle to reform is not the conservatism of the bureaucracy, great though that is, but the decrepit state of the economy. Economic control would be recentralised as the only way to tame the monopolies. Periodic crash programmes to improve production would disguise a tacit retreat into lower expectations and stagnation, but without the corruption which marked the Brezhnev years. In effect it would be an attempt to preempt the crisis by winding the whole thing down.

The one thing going for such an approach is its realism. But it is not a viable strategy. The politics of the past have been so vilified it would be virtually impossible for a political leader to be associated with recidivism. Most importantly, it would simply not deliver the goods for the Soviet consumers or other customers like the military.

The second option is that a version of Soviet social democracy will emerge like a Menshevik phoenix. This would be based on multi-party democracy, a market-led economy, a plurality of forms of ownership, integration into the world economy and a welfare system to cope with social costs. It would be a passage from state planning to social-democratic corporatism.

Such a system would unleash political and social energy by freeing people from the state, the party and the plan.

**'Nationalism  
would  
combine  
spirituality  
and naked  
self-interest,  
unite state  
and society'**



Civil society, public spaces in politics, culture and the economy would gradually fill with people taking independent initiatives. The distribution of the social costs would be agreed through a democratic political system which was capable of forming some sort of consensus.

This is the most attractive future for the Soviet Union. But it would be a miracle if there were a smooth transition to social democracy. There is no strong social-democratic tradition. More importantly, there are no strong tripartite social-democratic institutions, representing industry, workers and government, which are capable of striking and implementing a bargain over the costs and benefits of restructuring. Political pluralism is growing, but at the moment is in disarray. Multi-party politics does not yet have a stable basis. For that to emerge the Soviet Communist Party would have to split openly.

Social-democratic bargains work best when oiled by economic growth. Not only are the internal economic conditions for sustained growth lacking, so are the external conditions. Postwar social democracy flourished amid world growth. But international markets have become more volatile and growth more uncertain.

**The well-springs of social democracy in Soviet society are very limited.** In contrast the well-springs of authoritarianism are diverse. The third option is an authoritarian restructuring. It might be a dynamic mixture of neo-stalinism and South Korea. It would be based on a reassertion of strict labour discipline and enjoy the tacit support of the military. It would focus on key sectors and enterprises as part of a state-led strategy to win positions in world markets. It would utilise familiar ideological themes – primarily the need to compete with the West – to galvanise a collective effort to revitalise the economy.

Such an approach has a lot going for it in the Soviet context. There are working models such as the Moscow Number One Watch Factory, which is a mixture of Lee Iacocca's style of management combined with socialist discipline. Most importantly, it fits with the economy's level of development. The model of the newly industrialising country – such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, which have combined state-led economic policy with a commitment to compete in world markets – may be of more relevance to Soviet economic development than Sweden or France.

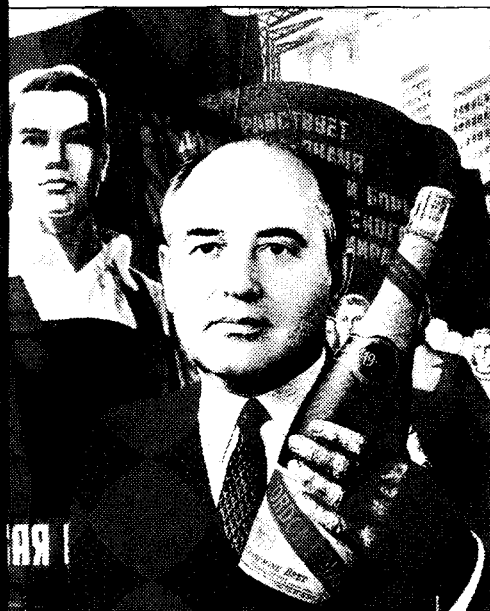
There are three potential bases for an authoritarian restructuring – the party, the presidency or nationalism.

The party is too slow moving, too wrapped into the corruption which is part and parcel of the inefficiency of the economy. Moreover it seems almost certain that the party will split. At the moment it is a political shell which houses at least two factions.

Gorbachev's powerful presidency stands more of a chance, although it already faces opposition because of his

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NEW EUROPE!

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## ANTI-SEMITISM, REVENGE KILLINGS AND THE UGLY, UGLY FACE OF NATIONALISM: IS THIS THE NEW EUROPE?

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**'The situation is so volatile, the crisis so acute that it would be wrong to dismiss the possibility of an apocalyptic political explosion'**



lack of a popular mandate or effective legislative checks on his power. However there would be a problem even if Gorbachev's presidency were based on a popular election throughout the USSR. What if 80% of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians simply boycotted the elections? What authority could a USSR president have over a Georgian republic intent on independence?

Gorbachev, even with his imperial powers, is unlikely to be able to turn back the tide of nationalism. If the union of the republics does not disintegrate, it will certainly have to be renegotiated. In such a situation the USSR presidency may have to be modelled more on the presidency of the European Commission than that of the United States.

**The final basis for authoritarianism is the** most potent and the most worrying. Nationalism is one of the most powerful currents in Soviet politics. Greater Russian nationalism could be the most powerful nationalism of all. Russia is overwhelmingly the dominant nation within the union. Many Russians look down on the other republics, which they believe have been pillaging Russia's wealth and culture. They feel they would be better off without many of the republics, or at least they should assert Russian national power to show the Azeris and Tajiks just where they stand. An alliance incorporating Byelorussia and the Ukraine might provide the basis for a greater Russian solution which would accept a much looser relationship with the Baltic states and the decay of the Asian underbelly.

Resurgent Russian nationalism runs with the grain of contemporary Soviet politics. It could resuscitate the fear and faith which used to make the Soviet system work and which the Gorbachev years have finally expunged. Even 10 years ago people were being told they were the future of humanity. Now they are being told they are poor and getting poorer. As the bonds which tied the old system together collapse, nationalism is the quickest force to fill the vacuum by providing a source of social solidarity. People have very little else to believe in. What other source of pride do they have in a society which has systematically stripped them of it?

It generates social energy by articulating more powerfully than any other force the collective grievance at the heart of the Soviet politics. It also seems to offer a better future. Surely with independence, republics will be able to exert more control over their own affairs, keep more of the rewards of their own labours?

Nationalism could also be the basis for reinstalling fear in 'non-nationals' through an extremely aggressive disciplinarian politics, proudly committed to competition with the West. No unfamiliar social-democratic institutions would be needed to sort out who should bear the costs. Nationality would provide the principles for the share-out. The outsiders would bear the costs —

the non-Russians, the non-Ukrainians, the Jews, the immigrants from far-flung republics.

The Soviet Union is fragmenting, the empire is dividing. Gorbachev's strategy seems to offer the Russians very little other than an orderly retreat, in the course of which they will have to make humiliating concessions to smaller republics. Resurgent nationalism would allow the Russians to grab their share of the spoils from the collapse of empire.

Nationalism would combine spirituality and naked self-interest, unite state and society. Rather than attempting to overcome social division and the collapse of the empire it would capitalise on them. Hyperinflation, unemployment and weak democratic institutions provide fertile ground for such politics.

**A** nationalist authoritarian solution is far from a foregone conclusion. The appetite for democracy is too developed to allow authoritarianism to reassert itself uncontested. The ties which bind the empire together will not be undone without even more economic dislocation. There are Russian minorities in most of the smaller republics which would be endangered.

Finally, because none of the first three options is assured of working, a *fourth* option must be considered. The economic crisis could become so great, the social costs so painful, the clamour for national independence so loud, the legitimacy of the political system so tenuous, that all semblance of discipline could disappear. It may be the difficulties are so intractable that they are incapable of resolution through an orderly political system. It could all explode in a sweeping, tumultuous, chaotic popular uprising.

Many of the conditions for such a movement emerging do not seem to be present. The optimism of the East European revolutions has already passed without any significant echo in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev may not be the hero he was two or three years ago, but he is not Erich Honecker. The popular movements in the USSR are a rag bag. The democratic demonstration in Moscow in February brought together racists and anti-racists, nationalists and social democrats. The democratic movement is already showing signs of fragmenting. However, the situation is so volatile, the crisis so acute that it would be wrong to dismiss the possibility of an apocalyptic political explosion.

**What conclusions can we draw from this** assessment of the four scenarios for the Soviet Union? Our ways of understanding what is going on in the Soviet Union are inadequate. Many in the West are still wedded to a leninist model of the society. If you can understand the general secretary then you can understand the party. The party is the key to understanding the state. As the state organises society through planning this is the key to understanding society itself.

The leninist legacy will affect what-

ever emerges in the Soviet Union. But a leninist model is increasingly misleading. Gorbachev is only one source of political initiative in a more pluralistic society which is starting to flex its muscles against the state.

However, Western models are also inappropriate. Simply comparing the Soviet Union with either neo-liberalism or social democracy in the West, and measuring how far it has to go, is misleading. It forgets where the society has come from. It underestimates the problems it faces. More importantly, it underestimates the extent to which the Soviet Union is made up of nations that are not Western, indeed they may be anti-Western. These models cannot account for the deeper forces of nationalism, religion and racism. It may well be the combination of economic backwardness, growing social unrest, the role of the military and the traditions of authoritarianism mean that the Far East and South America provide better guides to the Soviet Union's future.

Whatever that future holds, it will be strongly influenced by the disintegration/renegotiation of the union between the republics. For that reason it is possible that there will not be a single overarching solution.

**A**ll four options are running through Soviet society. Much of the economy will continue to labour under the legacy of Brezhnevism. Forms of multi-party social democracy may well emerge for instance, in some of the Baltic states, if not in Moscow. Gorbachev's imperial presidency is established. But the leadership is losing public confidence and its grip on the republics. For many people perestroika no longer represents a credible or inspiring future. Gorbachev may yet succeed. But the prospects for a successful perestroika are receding fast. The main event is likely to be a race between authoritarian Russian nationalism and the calamitous collapse of all authority into the arms of popular revolt. It is these two tendencies which have the capacity to engage popular grievance, mythology and imagination.

It is virtually impossible to return from the Soviet Union without feeling exhilarated by the upheaval, hope, ideas and energy which Gorbachev has unleashed. But the feeling which has stayed with me longest is the tragedy of it all. This is a people who were slaughtered in their millions by one of their leaders, before dying in their millions to defeat Nazism. After that they endured economic stagnation, while corrupt leaders lorded it over them in the name of creating humanity's future. Now they are facing the break-up of the empire, the loss of superpower status and even harsher economic hardships. A successful transition to an orderly democracy, based on a prosperous economy, would run against the grain of Soviet history. Not just the communist grain but the tragic grain. The tragedy of the Soviet Union is far from over.●

# Work Your Body!

Sport used to be confined to the school playing field and the football stadium. Now it is all around us.

Everyone seems to be getting fit, working out, going for a run, or doing aerobics. This is the era of sport and fitness.

In his prize-winning article **Matt Seaton** gets inside the fitness revolution



The first *Marxism Today* 'New Times New Writing' competition was held at the end of 1989 in association with Serpent's Tail publishers. Our aim was to encourage new writers, under 25, to capture the changing events, moods and issues as we enter the 1990s. The judges, Sue Townsend, Stuart Hall, Martin Jacques and Marsha Rowe, awarded first prize to Matt Seaton for his piece 'Work Your Body!', printed here. The runners-up were David Hawkins, for his short story 'Emma', and FM Simpson with an article on the spirit of new times.

If the late 1960s and early 1970s were all about 'dropping out' and 'staying loose', then the late 1980s were about being 'leaner and tougher and more flexible'. These words come from a recent British Steel tv advert, in which a blue-collar worker works out in a designer weight-training room. The work he's doing in terms of personal fitness acts as a metaphor for the Thatcherite transformation of British Steel's competitiveness and profitability. This has been one of the recurring themes in Tory rhetoric, especially in Norman Tebbit's utterances about the 'permissive 60s': the 1960s and 1970s were responsible for an economic flabbiness and a moral decadence which has only been corrected by the rigorous exercise of market discipline.

Social Darwinism has returned to haunt us, as the 'survival of the fittest' has become the main imperative of economic and social life. The invisible hand of the market takes the weak and unfit players 'out of the game'. After 11 years on the substitutes' bench, 'socialism' is represented as a loser.

The explicit linking, by advertisers and politicians, of the twin notions of *economic* and *physical* competitiveness is not simply a clever play of words. It is the job of such people to identify and respond to popular moods and aspirations, and what they have latched on to is something which has actually happened in our everyday lives.

Amid all the changes to our society and economy associated with Thatcherism there has been an enormous growth in the time, energy and enthusiasm that ordinary people devote to physical fitness and health. Some of the traditional sports have been revitalised, but the exciting innovation is the multitude of new games and activities now available.

Always quick to capitalise, the people who make it their business to sell us the values and culture of what Raymond Williams called 'mobile privatisation' have stepped in with their version of what fitness is all about. According to them, the new physical culture is simply about beating the competition. By transposing the values of 'popular capitalism' on to the new popular culture of sport and fitness, they have created a powerful message, because everybody wants to be a winner. The message is all the more potent because it seems to be in tune with what people out there in the real world are actually doing – playing squash, going swimming, filling dance and aerobics classes, working out.

It becomes extremely difficult to sort out the elements of this coincidence between sport and society. The consumer boom of Thatcherism appears closely linked to the new physical culture: sports centres, a highly desirable investment for property developers, have mushroomed, while chains of shops like Olympus have cashed in heavily on the new demand for high-quality, attractive sportswear.

This retailing revolution has trans-

formed our city centres and our experience of being consumers. Recent years have seen a busy exchange between street fashion and sportswear – from the shiny tracksuits and Reebok training shoes of the hip-hop uniform, and the contour-hugging lycra of cycling chic, to the jogging pants and designer ski-wear of the home counties. Sportswear has been a very dynamic market, developing new materials and technologies and creating new consumers. In these respects it has been very much centre-stage in the advent of 'popular capitalism'.

It would be a mistake, however, to place too much emphasis on the retailing revolution alone, for it downplays the extent to which the new interest in physical culture is 'consumer-led', determined by people as agents not passive victims of marketing campaigns. It also leads to a false picture of the new physical culture and why it is different.

The new popular sports and their corresponding physical culture have not simply been launched at us by advertisers and retailers; there is an internal development, a history of sport and its institutions, which needs to be examined. Part of the explanation for our current obsession with working out and looking good must lie in the *relative* historical decline of the previously dominant sports. These sports belonged to the Fordist era of mass participation and collective association. Huge spectatorships – predominantly male and working-class in composition – were organised around team games, chiefly football. There were important regional differences, of course: cricket was a much more middle and upper-class game in southern England; rugby union was played mainly in grammar schools and public schools in England, but in Wales was a genuinely popular game, like rugby league is in northern England.

But the real point is that these 'mass' sports were the only games, to all intents and purposes, which were available to most people, in their schools and localities and on their radios and televisions. School was the most important locus of sport and physical exercise for the vast majority of the population, and for many – particularly women – sport finished when they left school. Most people's experience of sport, therefore, was compulsory and regimented.

In common with many other features of Fordist mass society, sport in schools was structured and disciplined like the factory, hierarchical and authoritarian. Team sports reproduced these patterns with internal hierarchies of rank – their captains, vice-captains, club secretaries and so on. They were also based on highly gendered divisions of activity: boys played football and cricket; girls played netball and hockey. The whole emphasis was on quantity not quality, on giving everybody a quota of exercise, with the minimum of choice and differentiation.

Dissatisfaction with this experience of



Cycling chic: New body-conscious street fashion

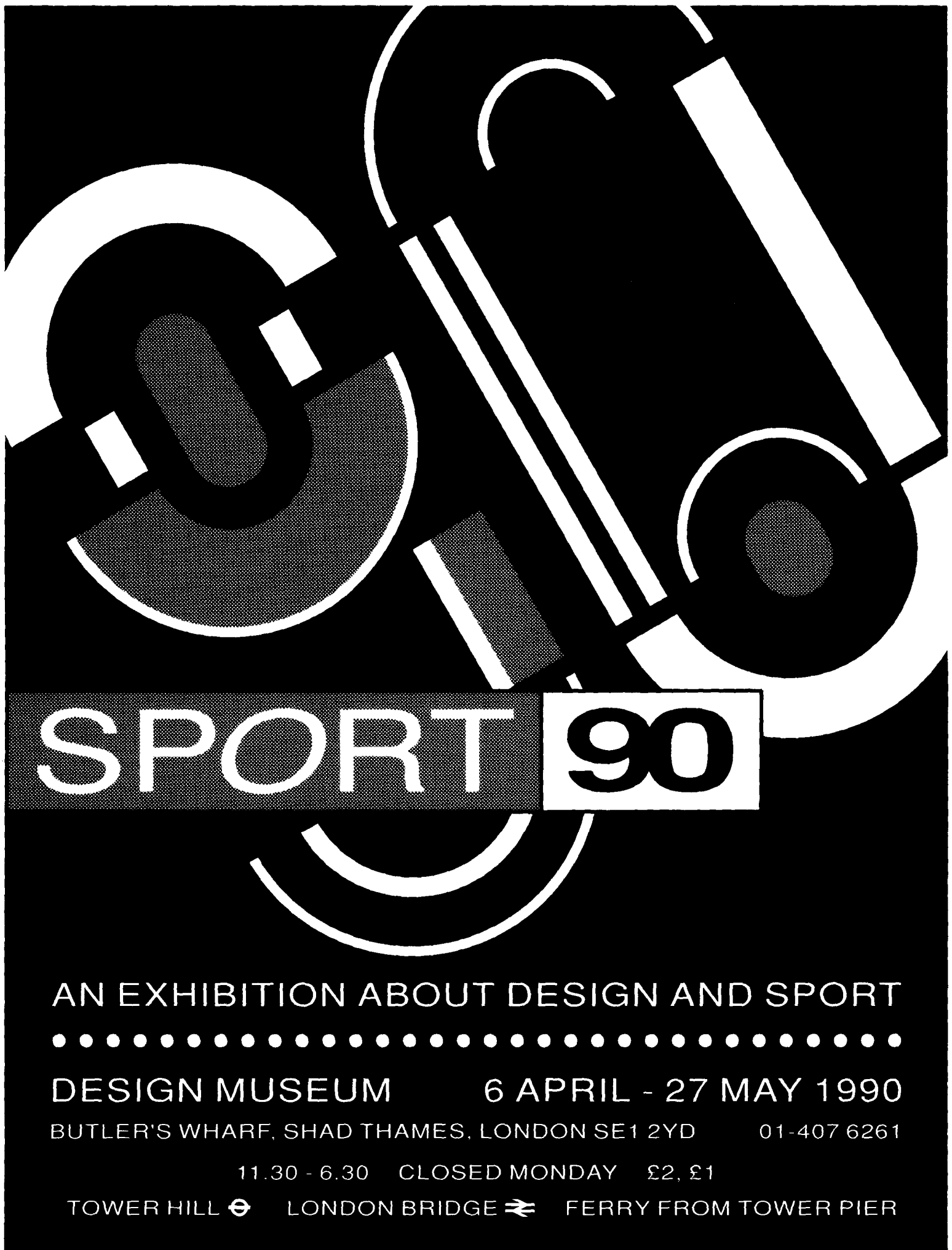
sport became a powerful stimulus for change: the demand for new activities and more choice ran parallel to the break-up of the old forms of consensus and collectivity in society at large. But there is another important strand in the decline, or rather displacement, of the old mass sports: they used to play an important symbolic role in our sense of national identity and prestige. The success of England in international competition was, and still is for some, a matter of great pride and significance.

The period in which these sports became mass pastimes and national games coincided with the last moments of imperial prowess. From an oppositional point of view, CLR James' passion for cricket was inspired by a sense of the sporting encounter as anti-colonial struggle. While in his later years he was able to enjoy the many routs endured by England at the hands of the West Indies, the symbolic place of cricket (and even more so football) in the scheme of popular English nationalism came under growing pressure.

**N**ow confronted by ignominious defeat and failure in international competition, the hysteria of the chant 'Two World Wars and One World Cup' betrays this growing sense of being besieged. The fact that even the last 'win' in this case was over 20 years ago implies an unconscious recognition of the loss of England's leading role in international competition. In the case of football, many spectators and followers have been alienated by the way the game has become identified with a retrogressive and violent nationalism – a kind of 'Falklands factor' on the terraces.

The displacement of the old 'mass' sports cannot simply be attributed to the fact that England now loses more matches than it wins. More significantly, England has lost the power to determine which sports carry most kudos on the international stage. In the new global arena, cricket, for instance, is no longer the 'big match' but a private argument between a few members of the Commonwealth. Many of the old games which once represented the bulk of our sporting horizon have become parochial affairs which themselves have to compete with the attractions of other sports from other nations.

With a passing resemblance to the phenomenon of world music, we have entered the age of world sport. New sports arrive almost daily on our television screens (from volleyball and snooker to American football and Sumo wrestling) in a headlong rush to meet the new demand for variety. The expertise and style with which these are presented has revolutionised sports coverage. In every field, from graphics to the quality of commentary and the conduct of interviews, the old mainstream has had to improve its presentation immeasurably just to keep up. The newer, more dynamic sports have been at the leading edge of this development, and this in itself has helped to change the



# SPORT 90

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image of sport, to make it 'sexy'.

The improved opportunities for participation afforded by the new sports have matched a popular will and motivation towards health and fitness. The gains are particularly significant for women: the desire for control over the body and the demand for physical self-definition have been consistent themes of feminist thinking, but these ideas have received a huge practical boost in popular appeal from the new physical culture. Aerobics has come a long way from physical jerks with the 'green goddess'. It is convenient because you can do it at home with Jane Fonda; or it's fun because you can do it at the sports centre with a group of other women. Women have also moved a long way from plain self-defence classes, with growing numbers taking up what were formally macho specialities – the martial arts. Documentaries have highlighted the history of women's sport, while a film like *Pumping Iron II – The Women* has empowered women to challenge the given gendered norms of size, shape, speed and strength for the female body.

**The growing demand for choice and pluralism** means that there are no new 'mass' collectivities to replace the old. The old football crowd does not suddenly turn up at the swimming pool or in the dance class. Many can still be found in the stands on a Saturday afternoon; but a lot of people also visit the sports centre on a Wednesday evening. If there is a new 'mass' experience, it is one of choice, differentiation and pluralism. Although they may not individually command the same numbers and loyalties of the old sports, the explosion of these new activities creates the opportunity for more active participation and greater self-expression. The mass spectacle of Fordism has been partially displaced by a 'flexible specialisation' in people's experience of sport.

**T**his underlines perhaps the single most important feature of the new physical culture – its individualism. Where *team* sports have arrived or survived, they tend to be a spectator-oriented televisual experience (like ice hockey, basketball, or American football). The real area of growth – the point at which the new ethical imperative of fitness and competition enters our lives – has been the kinds of activity which are essentially *self-centred* and individualistic. Weight-training and swimming are the best examples, but running, cycling and even squash have elements of these new values. The individualism implicit in these new activities is in marked contrast to the 'teamwork' and collective organisation of the old 'mass' sports. It contains an element of narcissism, but it is also a positive, self-starting individualism concerned with physical fitness as health and well-being.

The narcissism of the new physical culture is highly visible in the contemporary cult of the body. The desirability

of the 'body beautiful' has assailed us from every direction: the erotic art photography of Bruce Weber's pictures of Olympic swimmers once represented a radical aesthetic departure, but these images are now endlessly reproduced in glossy magazines, on billboards and in tv adverts.

**A**s a result of the huge demand, the weight-training room has now become a mandatory feature of all the old municipal sports centres as well as the numerous private gymnasium clubs which have sprouted up everywhere. The floor-to-ceiling mirror, the *sine qua non* of the weights room (and indeed the dance studio), underlines the fact that there is no stigma attached to looking at yourself while you work out. In fact, self-regard is an essential feature of the new physical culture, because 'looking good is feeling good'.

Nobody (except possibly Nigel Lawson) has wanted to look like the bloated plutocrat of Georg Grosz's 1920s' cartoons, even in our age of grotesque, market-dominated greed. In fact Arnold Schwarzenegger in an Armani suit or Florence Griffith-Joyner (Flo Jo) in her designer running gear provide more accurate role models. Perhaps because of its link to a meritocratic individualism, the quest for the body beautiful still fills some with a hostility to the 'body fascism' of all this physical exercise. They claim to see the spectre of a noxious eugenicism lurking in this cult of the body – an unholy blend of the Nazi slogans, 'work makes free' and 'joy through health'. But the mass solutions of fascism bear no relation to the high individualism of the cult of the body in the post-Thatcherite 90s.

Far from being the cultivation of a master race, the current cult of the body is the apotheosis of the individualism and consumerism implied by the phrase 'mobile privatisation': nowadays people spend time and money not simply on clothes but on their actual physical appearance. They invest in 'redeveloping' their physique. As *Guardian* sports writer Matthew Engel has sardonically pointed out, in the 60s and 70s young people used to take drugs for recreation and fun, but now they take them to enhance their bodies' performance (and therefore, in some cases, to increase their earning potential). It is a safe bet that there are more steroid-takers than cocaine users in the USA. For many, the time, money and intensity that now go into physical fitness and exercise is quite out of proportion to any health benefit that accrues. The downside of this physical culture is a new kind of fetishism of fitness, a reification of the body.

**But this aspect of the new physical culture's individualism** should not obscure its genuinely progressive features. People are motivated to get fit by a renewed sense of personal responsibility. They are informed by a growing awareness of the health risks of a

**'With a passing resemblance to the phenomenon of world music, we have entered the age of world sport'**



sedentary lifestyle, and a desire to exercise control over their own health in a preventive way. This could also be interpreted as an unwillingness to be forced by poor health into a debilitating state of dependency on the health care provided by the welfare state, adding a whole new meaning to the notion of privatising health care. Instead of privatisation meaning an attack on collective values, it has the potential to mean a radically new sense of *social* responsibility – uncharacteristically rooted in individualism.

Many of those who are now improving their sense of well-being and health through fitness are people for whom sport was simply not available before. The sense in which the new sports of 'mobile privatisation' make space for new physical actors, new communities of people who take pleasure in working out, indicates that there is a profoundly progressive side to these developments. Despite the explicit individualism contained in the DIY fitness ethic, these new sporting activities exhibit a strongly *social* inclination. It has proved possible to mobilise these individuals as really large collectivities (in their tens of thousands) for good causes, in the form of fun runs, swimathons and sponsored rides.

Simply because its growth has coincided with a period of economic individualism and intensely meritocratic mobility, some seem tempted to write off the new physical culture as an unwelcome creation of the now-tarnished ideology of popular capitalism. But those who are keen to keep politics out of sport will be delighted to discover how difficult it is to make sport, whose institutions and subcultures are so firmly rooted in civil society, serve such a nakedly political end as promoting Thatcherism. We shouldn't believe the hype: an unstable collection of words and ideas about 'competitiveness' and fitness was opportunistically cemented into a crude message about *economic* values by people with an interest in marketing a particular lifestyle option or in selling a particular set of political affiliations.

The new physical culture of fitness needs to be detached from this arbitrary co-option into the narrative of 'popular capitalism'. Its degree of pluralism and 'flexible specialisation' should in fact be in tune with a 90s' individualism which is concerned with a new vision of personal and social responsibility. Placing a firm emphasis on the value of control, self-determination and autonomy, the physical culture of the 90s will no longer be about 'being tough enough to beat the rest', but about the fulfilment of a diversity of private needs and pleasures in a socially organised and enabling environment. Far from being irreversibly shackled to the one-dimensional perspective of neo-liberal values, the new physical culture is about health, fun, pleasure and wider participation – a new horizon of choice and opportunity.●

Andy Medhurst enjoys spending a day at the races

## Horseplay

The Grand National, to be run this year on April 7, is one of those sporting landmarks by which we measure out the year. Even more than the Derby, it's the occasion when people who ignore racing for the rest of the time take some kind of interest. It's the one horse race of which everyone gets to know the result. Television has a crucial role in this – Grand National Day, like the corresponding occasions of the Cup Final and the Boat Race, is one of those rare Saturdays when BBC1's *Grandstand* comes from the location of a sporting event. For that day and that day only, horse racing sets the sporting agenda.

Is it just an excuse for an annual outbreak of national gambling? Partly yes, but it's also a display of public commitment to one of the oldest of organised sports, one which boasts an unusually rich and fascinating culture, of which gambling is only one aspect.

Along with drinking to excess and sex beyond the grim necessities of procreation, gambling forms the traditional trio of pleasures frowned upon by the puritans of this world. It's never had a very good press, it's always been one of the things that evangelicals have tried, in the name of salvation, to deny to working people. 'This crime,' thundered the Reverend T DeWitt Talmage in a Victorian tract entitled *The Abominations Of Modern Society*, 'is no newborn sprite but a haggard transaction that comes staggering down under a mantle of curses through many centuries.' I'd hate to minimise the financial and emotional problems that excessive gambling can bring, but it's the 'excessive' that matters here. Over-indulgence in any pleasurable activity can cause difficulties, but only the sourest zealot would use the addiction of an unfortunate few as the reason for closing those activities down.

So what exactly are the pleasures of gambling? They're elusive, for one thing, because most flutters end in loss. But all those losses miraculously evaporate in the blissful mo-

ment of a substantial win, that wholly illusory but deeply satisfying feeling that you've put one over on the bookies. There's a palpably masochistic delight in entrusting your money to a very small man on a very big horse and then settling down to watch the outcome on television. If only he can get past the grey and close in on the filly I could win... But nine times and more out of 10, the grey accelerates, the filly holds her ground, and all you're left with is a torn-in-half betting slip. Maybe next time – and it's the seductions of 'maybe' that keep taking you back.

There are those dedicated or wealthy enough to have credit accounts and flutter by phone, but for the rest of us the betting shop is a key site of this culture. Stereotypically, these are thought of as back-street, smoke-filled, male-only enclaves, mysterious and forbidding, a space for transactions that may no longer be illegal but which still evoke a shady world of gangsters, cigars and whispered tips. Not any more. The big companies who control the industry have glamorised the shops, putting in bright lights, banks of tv screens, even tea and coffee in some bigger branches. Women work there, but the punters are still overwhelmingly male. The Grand National is one of the rare instances where women do bet in large numbers. Every year one horse, usually by virtue of its name, is dubbed, patronisingly, the 'housewives' favourite'.

I once spent a summer working in a betting shop. Over the three months that I was there, I became gradually, impressively integrated into a community. Betting shops offer the kind of freemasonry that soaps like *EastEnders* mistakenly locate in pubs. You go to a pub for a variety of reasons, drink is often incidental, but nobody enters a bookie's unless they want to bet.

So the customers I met every day, whatever their social background, were all, like the staff, hooked into the serious business of the day's



racing, bound into the narratives of expectation, despair, redemption and triumph that made up the afternoon. From the old woman in fluffy slippers and quilted housecoat who'd shuffle in for her 'through-the-card reverse-forecast doubles' at Crayford dogs (there's a real rough poetry in betting terminology) to the camel-overcoat brigade slapping down their wads to follow

Carson at Newbury, we were as one, if only for a few hours.

Going to the races is a different experience entirely. Each course has its own flavour, according to its location and the types of racing it offers. London orbital courses like Kempton and Sandown possess a sort of tatty suburban flash, despite repeated attempts to hoist them up-market. You can imagine, some time ago, Diana Dors



Illustration: Nick Kobyluch

or Barbara Windsor posing here for photographers. Seaside courses like Brighton and Yarmouth open only during the summer months, and are part of the wider atmosphere of the fish-and-chips day trip, while much of the winter national hunt season takes place in venues like Uttoxeter and Kelso. This is real wellington-boot country, and a trip to a course of that kind is a great excuse to go

rural. A day at the races is the only time I can wear my tweed cap with any degree of semiotic confidence.

Flat racing has become a multi-million-pound international industry, based on the supposed science of breeding. There's no place here for the nature-versus-nurture debate: sprinters breed sprinters, stayers breed stayers, and the language of inheritance is unapologetically

phallogocentric – a horse is said to be 'by' its male parent, 'out of' the female. The problem with the four-legged superstars of the flat is that their careers are so brief. The stud fees commanded by proven winners are enormous, so the financial incentives of turning them from running machines into breeding machines confine their racing days to three seasons at most. They appear, dazzle and vanish like so much equine lightning.

Over the jumps, however, careers last much longer, so it's here that the real characters emerge, the horses which acquire massive reservoirs of public devotion. Season after season they turn out, risking injury and even death. The 60s had Arkle, the 70s Red Rum and today the nation's favourite horse is the beautiful, almost-white Desert Orchid, whose front-running tactics show a contemptuous disregard for the fences in his way. He's a true star, and his appearance at a racecourse is guaranteed to double or treble the attendance figures.

National hunt, as the name implies, is part of a whole range of rural equestrian activities, most of which I shudder to describe. Point-to-point, eventing, show-jumping (with its blood-red hunting coats), hunting itself – all these are strongly linked to the racing world. There are also aristocratic connections (Lord Oaksey must be the only peer with a regular job in television) which reach their peak with the involvement of the royal family. The queen mother is usually regarded, with distressing sycophancy, as the patron saint of national hunt racing, and both she and her elder daughter own a number of successful horses. Royal Ascot is the annual celebration of these links, and it's also the only time women are allowed into the television commentary box – not, heaven forbid, to talk about the sport, but to pass judgment on the queen's new navy-and-white number or Fergie's latest crêpe belltent.

Despite all this, one of the

most potent myths of racing is that its devotees are made up of a unique social mix. It's the 'sport of kings' but commands a huge working-class following. There's a kind of Edwardian fantasy at work here, in which top-hatted toffs and gawd-bless-you-guv pearlies rub shoulders, while only the vinegar-faced middlebrow methodist stays aloof and disapproving. A caricature, but one founded on a tiny grain of truth, since it does seem to be the middle stratum of society which is least touched by the joys of the turf, the self-employed whose grasping care of finances makes betting seem like a diversion sent from hell. All the same, the racecourse, unlike the betting shop, is organised into a hierarchy based on entrance prices. Like the theatre, the more you can pay, the better your view. Racing has also become an important venue for displays of corporate hospitality by companies with clients to impress.

The hierarchy of racing is most marked in its employment practices. Its labour relations would make William Wilberforce blush. Stable lads are kept on virtual starvation wages, few jockeys ever get rich, but trainers thrive as part of the squirearchy. Everyone in racing wears some form of headgear, thus facilitating the raising or doffing which symbolise the rigidly patrolled social boundaries.

So, horse racing is class-bound, misogynistic, royalist and couldn't even exist in a culture which took animal rights seriously. Yet I wouldn't be parted from it. The fantasies unleashed by betting, the possibility of instant gain without hard work, are also fed by the football pools, but what I really love about racing is summed up by the sheer thrill of the start of the Grand National, the sights and sounds of horses in motion. The buzz I get at that moment derives, perhaps, from echoes of the rural past we all, however distantly, share. Those are roots that generations of urban living have still not managed to eradicate.●



John Ellis explores off-screen tv bias

## Porridge And Treacle

It has become almost a truism that television interviews are manipulated to suit the programme makers. Politicians and industrialists alike complain that their contribution 'was cut about' to 'distort' what they actually said. And this perception seems to be backed up by bias-seeking content analyses of interviews from both right and left.

But who is really doing the manipulation? There is a degree of disingenuousness in the way these powerful people present themselves as powerless in the hands of television producers. For television interviewing has undergone a sea-change. Nowadays, an interview with politicians, civil servants, representatives of corporate power and even some scientists has become a suspicious, guarded, even flirtatious affair.

What we see on the screen has become more opaque as a result. The power interview has become a less effective form of television. It has become more difficult for viewers to gain any real sense of the politics and the power relations (what in more naive times might have been called 'the truth') of any situation.

The power interview always was a tricky form. Unlike the more relaxed chat show, its origins stretch back to the birth of mass television. It is not a dialogue, more a collision of monologues. The interviewer is trying to elicit comment or fact to fit into a general thesis: that the economy is in a mess; that eating beef brains can drive you mad; that there are crooks in the financial services industry.

The interviewees may have agreed to be interviewed on these subjects, but their aims are different. They are using tv to present themselves as important; to promote the ineffable wisdom and goodness of their products or policies; to reassure the public that there is nothing to worry about and that black can be seen in certain circumstances as closely resembling white.

Interviews used to be the



place where attitudes would collide. This was the main reason for putting them on tv in the first place. Entertainment was mixed with information as the viewers judged for themselves the honesty and accuracy of each party. It is now an electric moment when this suddenly occurs, as Mrs Thatcher found out on a live phone-in soon after the Falklands war, when she was taken to task on the Belgrano issue by a caller. There was no preparation for this encounter, no previous agreement about subjects and etiquette, simply a raw confrontation of ideas.

Such chance events, where reality erupts into the tv format, bring home how constructed and circumscribed the power interview normally is. Typically, it is the result of a long process of negotiation and packaging. Perhaps

television itself initiated the change by introducing more programmes in which various interviews were intercut, rather than running an interview in a longer form. Certainly, considerable paranoia exists within industry as well as politics about 'how they might cut up my contribution'. However, it is a very tricky job, if not an impossible one, to distort the recorded utterances of an individual without it being obvious.

A more easily hidden form of manipulation comes from the side of the interviewees. 'Public relations' and 'media training' have introduced a new problem into interviewing. A whole industry exists to obfuscate issues. The growing role of Bernard Ingham and his subtle forms of media management are widely known and have been imi-

tated to some extent by the Labour Party in opposition. Such moves can be criticised because there is, in theory at least, some requirement of public accountability on our politicians. But the Ingham machine in Whitehall is only the government version of a similar mechanism that operates throughout industry.

Training in television interview techniques for senior management is now commonplace. It's easy enough to spot the results on screen: the interviewees, relentlessly bland and amiable, do not so much answer the question as ruminate at a small distance from the subject. They indulge in all the routine tricks, from 'I'm very glad you asked me that, but before I answer I would just like to point out...', to tripping up the interviewer by denying something that they had cheerfully acknowledged to be true immediately before the interview began.

The first tactic guarantees that the viewer (and sometimes the interviewer too) forgets the question, or at least means that considerable time is used for a promotional monologue. The second is something that still reduces many interviewers to outraged splutters or to an over-aggressive restatement of the question.

Interviewers can scarcely get self-righteous about these techniques because they are taught, for large sums, by none other than experienced television interviewers during their 'resting periods'. After all, only interviewers can teach such techniques as 'the uncuttable sentence', 'knocking the media' or 'appealing directly to the audience'.

Such techniques can be spotted by viewers, but they nevertheless continue to blunt the collision of attitudes that is the stuff of a good informative interview. But before an interview can even take place, an increasing number of hurdles have to be jumped. This steeplechase has been devised by the ever-expanding PR industry. Large companies now employ agencies or set up their own press departments

Charlotte Du Cann is taking to the road

## Escape Routes



through whom all requests for interviews must be channelled. Often former journalists, they act as a buffer, since they can spin out the process of 'finding someone to answer your questions' until deadlines loom.

In some consumer-sensitive industries, the food industry for example, this process has gone further. Individual companies now refer tv researchers to trade associations who can provide spokespeople for the whole industry. Their one qualification over that of the PR person is that they know a considerable amount about the industry concerned, and charmingly communicate

**'The process of securing an interview has become more tortuous, and the act of interviewing is often like wading through treacle'**

these facts in large slabs during the interview. They are a gift to the majority of programme researchers: the hurried and harried recently ex-students who know little or nothing about the subject of the programme they are working on. But for an interviewer, they are like eating cold porridge.

The power interview on television has ceased to be a confrontation whose battle-lines are clear to the audience. It has been overtaken by a war of position, a dance of discourses rather than a collision between them. The process of securing an interview has become more tortuous, and the act of interviewing is often like wading through treacle.

It is this hidden process, more than any bias in the way that programmes are constructed, that has changed the terms of the television interview. We have reached a situation where the majority of people with political and economic power who appear on television are well able to manipulate the situation to their advantage. It is they, rather than the broadcasters, who are drifting closer to hoodwinking the viewers.●

In the 80s nobody travelled but everyone went shopping. In the culture that weighed a person's worth in terms of their credit, their hardware and their house, there was scant regard for the voyager who sought for a universal meaning unencumbered by material things.

The consumer generation did go on holiday, of course. It went away to fabulous places of which its parents had only dreamed: Thailand, Turkey, Goa, the Caribbean. Exotic locations where overworked minds and bodies could be rested and pampered. And where there was no shortage of souks. Destinations in the 80s would always be appraised in terms of their markets and their restaurants. Look, the travellers declared, look at this jewellery we bought, this rug, these strange and rare peppers. They were so cheap!

At one time the most popular city in the world was Bangkok because the sweatshops could turn out imitation Japanese labels for a fraction of the price. When they returned, these travelling salesmen would proudly display their spoils around their homes. The world had become one vast emporium: a global Conran.

But you could not call this travel. There was no attempt to understand the countries that were visited, certainly no attempt to talk to their peoples. If there was communication, it was to steal their music to fuel the jaded songs of the West. There was no yearning to live or experience the world in a different way. Everyone stayed firmly inside their hotels. Nobody went native, stayed on, dropped out. Although some bought villas.

But as the 80s have drawn to a close and the serious money has begun to run out, travel is taking on a new significance. The material goods that once appeared so glittering and so desirable have lost their shine. The credit card, the hardware and the house that everyone is now fighting so hard to keep, no longer seem enough to sustain us. Everyone has begun to look abroad, literally and metaphorically.

In the 90s we have begun to realise the legacy that our greed has left us: an empty

casket. 'Our civilisation is all about means presented as ends, like health and money,' said the designer Vivienne Westwood. 'But what can you do with health and money if you have no brain?'

The 80s produced many things but it produced no philosophy, no ideology, no spirituality, no quest. Not only were its people still but their hearts, minds and souls stayed at home too. All the radical thinking of the 80s came from the new Right, those who championed a locked door and a closed mind. Ideas were perceived as some new concept for shiny magazines or post-modern architecture. Art was given value only if it triumphed in the marketplace. The archetypal explorers, the students and bohemians, never went on the road. There was, as Margaret Thatcher rightly pointed out, no alternative.

There are signs that this is now changing. And changing fast. The beginning of the new decade has seen the erstwhile consumer playing with alternative thinking like a clumsy child: the new hippydom, the green movement, the mysticism of the new age, the hedonism of acid house. But all these phenomena are still expressed in the old language of buy and sell. Concern for the planet is expressed by the purchase of ecological washing powder, new age by an expensive crystal. The new hippies are those who pay for alternative cures, acid housers are those who wear fashionable track-suits. The only language that now seems appropriate to explain the zeitgeist is an older lexicon still: the vocabulary of beat.

There are obvious (and old-fashioned) style pointers to the re-emergence of beat as the nostalgia for the 90s: the opening of Jazz FM, the reissue of *On The Road*, the return of the bohemian striped top. Each age chooses its own nostalgia, some for its goods and chattels and some for its attitude. The beat attitude of the 90s comprises a geographical searching for revelation (typified by the reappraisal of the prophetic-hobo songs of Bob Dylan) and a spiritual searching (typified by the reappraisal of religious Eastern and sha-





Illustration: Beverly Levy

manistic writing). It is also fuelled by the return of the bohemian as role model, the intellectual of the *demi-monde* whose existence was dismissed in the last decade.

In the 90s, the choice of destinations has changed, away from lush escapist shopping centres to disturbing mind-altering landscapes: deserts with hallucinogenic light, big alienating cities. It is no accident that Tangier, resort for old bohemia, sex, drugs and existentialism, is the location for every glossy magazine, nor that acid, the drug of a thousand trips, has replaced cocaine, drug of the powertrip.

The most potent symbol of this new restlessness is, of course, the road. The road has always signified change and a new beginning, from *The Grapes Of Wrath* to *Easy Rider*. As the culture of the 90s threatens to become more deeply circumscribed by home and family, the strict suburban conformity depicted by films such as *Parenthood*, so the aesthetic of the outsider will become more powerful. Although the film *Drugstore Cowboy* was set in the 70s, its attitude was entirely modern. Its characters were grown-ups (including an ancient William Burroughs) who had deliberately chosen not to belong to the status quo, who liked living in the twilight zone, who liked to keep on travelling.

For it is not kids who are rethinking what was once called lifestyle but the generation who have worked throughout their 20s. The new beatniks are the enemies of *thirtysomething*. Their departure is not a coincidence of youth but a decision made with all the pragmatism learnt in the 80s. *Drugstore Cowboy* was the first road movie of the 90s.

I don't imagine that every disillusioned consumerist is now going to start hitching like Sal Paradise, or pile into a new version of Ken Kesey's bus, but some will. Not everyone will quit their jobs or leave home, but in their imaginations they will. And it will not be to reach a pre-determined destination but for the sheer joy of moving, of discovery, of starting again, not only physically but mentally and spiritually as well. ●

## Road Map

### Roadies

Jack Kerouac  
Bob Dylan  
Dervla Murphy  
Michael Palin  
Don Juan  
Bruce Chatwin  
Lee Marvin  
Wim Wenders  
St Paul  
Dorothy

### Road Reading

Howl  
The Songlines  
Treasure Island  
Robinson Crusoe  
Siddhartha  
The Outsider  
The Adventures Of  
Augie March  
Granta Travel Writing  
A compass  
Palms

### Where To be Seen

Greyhound bus stations  
Bucket shops  
The desert  
City Lights Bookshop  
Jumping trains  
In the distance

### Destinations

'America'  
Alaska  
Morocco  
Alice Springs  
Destiny  
Damascus  
Nirvana  
Oz

### What To Wear

Fluorescent On White  
Timberland boots  
White jeans  
Leather jacket  
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David Icke's green enlightenment

## New Goals For Old

**Former professional footballer, tv presenter and speaker for the Green Party, David Icke talks to Chris Granlund about the role reading played in changing his life.**

I left school never having read a single book from cover to cover. I wanted to be a footballer and that was all that mattered to me. I couldn't concentrate on books, all I read were the *Beano* and *Football Monthly*. At home we had the *Mirror* and the *Daily Sketch*, I always used to read the newspapers. We were a Labour household and talked a lot of politics at home.

I was brought up in a council house in Leicester. It was a 50s' housing estate and we moved there in 1954 when I was two. My parents still live there. My father struggled to make ends meet. I remember that on Thursdays my mother and I used to go down to the clock factory where he worked. The wages were paid at about two o'clock and we used to nip round the back where my father would slip out and give us money to buy food for that day. The money just stretched out across the week.

My mother worked in a shoe factory, later she was a school dinner lady and up to her retirement a few months ago she was a hospital cleaner. When I was a kid, my father used to make toys at Christmas. Once he made banjos out of recycled Fray Bentos tins and planks of wood. My mother went out with a pram trying to flog these home-made banjos to raise some money for Christmas and, being the woman she was, she managed to get rid of them.

I left school without any paper qualifications to become a footballer at the age of 15. As a footballer you are so protected from the real world. Everything's done for you, you're not expected to think. I came out of football when my contract was cancelled because I had rheumatoid arthritis. It was like stepping out blinking into the headlights of an oncoming train.

By the time I found a job as a reporter on a small local



newspaper, I had £36 in the world, no income and my mortgage was £56 per week. At the same time I was discovering lots of new things that had previously passed me by. I developed an insatiable desire for knowledge which I still have now more than ever before.

By the mid-70s I had started to read avidly so that by the beginning of the 80s, far from not having read a book from cover to cover, I was reading at least four books a month. I'd finish one and move straight on to the next. It was a question of getting the information, the facts I wanted. I couldn't read a fiction book, fact is more incredible than anything any fiction writer can come up with. I just couldn't read fiction, wouldn't thank you for it.

At that time I read Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* which had a tremendous impact on me. In another of his books, *Good Work*, he talks about the perversion of human beings by factory production. It shows how human beings are not treated as individuals with inspiration and creativity.

Another excellent book is *The Cost Of Economic Growth*, it takes apart the present

system, eats it up and spits it out. It was written 23 years ago but even if it were written today it would be ahead of time, a stunning read.

The thing that really put me into overdrive was a Greenpeace leaflet that came through my letter box. On one page it put into context not just the scale of the environmental problem but also the timescale. It imagined the earth to be 46 years of age and it went through history until it got to the industrial revolution beginning 60 seconds ago and I thought, 'my God, we've done it in the blink of an eye'.

I started reading all the books I could find on related subjects. I have read virtually every green book that has come on to the market in the last ten years. Eventually you wake up and it all slots into place. Of course, all that reading has influenced my personal life. My vegetarianism goes back to a book called *Living Without Cruelty*, which is about how farm animals are treated. I got to page six and I've never eaten meat since.

One of the frustrating things about being in the Green Party is that people expect you to be absolutely perfect. One of

the problems I have with my full-time job and working for the greens is not being able to be at home with the family. I've spent five nights at home in the last five weeks. It is desperate.

But you see you're pulled both ways. I've got a boy of 8 and a girl of 15 and I want to spend time with them. But I also know that if I want to do the best for them, I can actually do more if I manage to persuade as many people as I can that we must go in another direction. It's a great dilemma and the balance is certainly not right at the moment. But when people come on to you and ask you to speak, when you feel so passionately about it as I do, then it's very difficult to say no. And it's no use complaining about it because we've got a limited time to do a great deal and you can't turn down the opportunity to spread the word. Travelling's the worst, it takes up so much time, although that's when I get a chance to do some reading.

The more I move down the road of green politics, the more I'm convinced that if the earth is a mile, we are only aware of about half an inch of it. I wasn't brought up in any particular religion and I think that organised religion is its own worst enemy because it is so rigid, imprisoned by tablets of stone. But I do think that the Bible is a wonderful book.

I came across a copy of one of those Gideon's bibles in a hotel in the mid-70s. I was greatly impressed by Jesus Christ. Although I'm not totally convinced that he was everything we are led to believe, he was a brilliant man, some of his lines were real show-stoppers.

Getting interested in green politics is not a religious conversion, I would call it more of an enlightenment. It's like someone coming along and cleaning your spectacles so that you can see through the con of the present system. And I have never been more confident and content, never been more at peace with myself at any time in my life as I have been since I saw the con for what it is. ●

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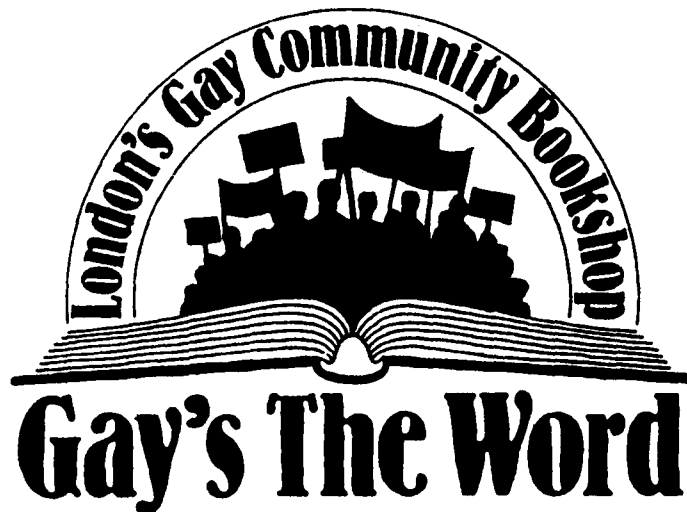
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Nick Lezard talks to author John Healy

# Fighting Spirits

There's a scenario that regularly crops up in fantasies about publishing. In it, an editor discovers a manuscript, slovenly-typed, covered in gravy stains, perhaps with a curt covering note that says something to the effect of 'I don't give a shit what you think of this'. The manuscript is passed from reader to goggle-eyed reader and described as: raw, powerful, honest, the voice of the streets, *real*, etc. The working-class author (the author is always working-class) becomes a literary star overnight. And that is where the fantasy usually peters out, when it becomes apparent that its purpose is to bring into relief not only the mannerisms of the publishers but also – and this is important – their credulity. The punchline is usually: and the funny thing was that the book was appalling all along. Boom boom. (Question: what does this scenario tell us about middle-class guilt?)

Something rather like this happened to John Healy. A London child of poor Irish parents, ex-army boxing champion, ex-dossier and, eventually, astonishingly, ex-chess master, he was advised to write down his life story while undergoing treatment for a savage kicking by the police. It ended up on ex-maverick Cambridge don Colin MacCabe's desk at the British Film Institute. As he read it, at a sitting, he declared that it was 'writing of the highest quality'. It was sent to Faber and Faber, published, and its author received the JR Ackerly prize for autobiography (1987 winner: *Little Wilson And Big God*, by A Burgess).

Books do not change people's lives, but they do change the way a life is looked at: **The Grass Arena** (Faber, pbk £3.99) is one such book. Questions of literary technique (as another critic said, Healy is no more Genet than MacCabe is Sartre) become irrelevant. Beside it Bukowski and Burroughs look like slummers. The trick is to carry a vision on to a work of fiction, and this is what Healy has done. He has written his first novel **Streets**

**Above Us** (Macmillan, hbk £12.95), and that is why I went to see him.

John Healy lives with his mother in a bog-standard late-60s council block that is neither gruesome enough to be railed against nor pleasant enough to be loved. The living room contains about a hundred books, maybe less, a chessboard, and a serious-looking chess computer. His mother, shy and perhaps nervous, brings us tea and biscuits. Twenty years ago she did not know whether her son was alive or dead.

You do not ask someone if they thought they were special when they were very manifestly at the bottom of the heap. Among his books are Martin Amis' *Money* and William Kennedy's *Ironweed*. Healy doesn't much like the genre of bum fiction. 'The dossers are all trying to be fucking Mozart, geniuses. The only thing they're interested in is money for drink and staying alive. That's the fucking genius. That's all I was interested in. I wasn't a writer.' When we talk about Amis he gets quite animated. 'It's good writing. I can't deny that. But he's just a middle-class ponce like all the rest. When he talks about drinking, about low-life, can't you see he's talking crap? Can't you see that? If he went on a drink for a week he'd come back *damaged*. (I'd make sure he was damaged.) But the class system protects all that lot. And they keep other writers out.'

An incident from *The Grass Arena*: just before a game his opponent said, 'Good evening, Mr Healy. I'm surprised to see you. They say you are a tramp off the streets.' Healy, naturally, went ballistic. But in the end that is what everyone he will meet from now on will say to him, with varying degrees of politeness, condescension, pity or awe. We mumble 'an extraordinary story' but choose to ignore its implications. And these are disturbing.

Healy watches over a powerful, relentless fatalism about the class system. From his treatment throughout his upbringing ('you get middle-class doctors, middle-class



John Healy – the publishing world comes down to earth

judges, and they're always pontificating about how the working class should behave themselves') to his treatment at Faber and Faber – 'a lot of middle-class ponces' – he has found the division in this country insuperable; not a matter for theoretical debate at all. Nothing he has done can change the fact that as soon as he opens his mouth someone is going to make a judgment about him. He doubts that there is anything he will ever be able to do that will change that. As one listens to him one realises just how crushing the system is. The middle class is not only in control of the literary world. It is in control of the language itself. '*The Outsider* – a brilliant book. But a working-class bloke couldn't have come off the streets and written that. It took him years of training.' Training, he points out, that was denied him. It is as if only his success could bring his failures into relief: 'If my dad had taught me chess when I was six I could have been a grand master. As it is I only learned how to move

the pieces when I was 30, after years drinking on bombsites. My brain was damaged. Still, I could play 20 people at once, blindfold, and beat them all. Not bad, eh? If I'd been brought up with books... ' He isn't bitter. Our chat goes on for two hours longer than I thought it would and we laugh a lot. 'I'm not getting at you, honest,' he says at one point.

Faber and Faber wanted him to change the last pages of *The Grass Arena*. The book ends with the battle against drink over, notionally, but with chess abandoned. It is curiously downbeat, but moving, and honest to his own experience. The standard happy ending militated by the convention of his story did not happen, and this irked his editors. We are happy to pigeonhole other people's experiences, to be able to reduce them to a formula. *The Grass Arena* is being filmed for the BBC, and they wanted the end changed too. 'They were going to get that Kenneth Branagh to play me.' Healy laughs. (Well, it is funny.)●

HO Nazareth on Kureishi and his critics

## Out Of The Ghetto

English literature, certainly since the late-19th century, has been indebted to foreigners and ex-colonials for a lot of modern writing that has internationalised its scope and perspectives. The over-cultivated piece of ground which English literature used to inhabit has been pretty much given over to hack writers and literary critics. Meanwhile, the writers here of foreign origin (Dhondy, Ishiguro, Mo, Phillips, Rushdie) are looking at Britain with new eyes. And the Brits they write about is different, not simply because of the war and the end of empire. The process of settlement by waves of ex-colonials adds further social juxtapositions, confrontations and experiences to be captured by pinned and wriggling words.

These writers have not had the benefit of literary criti-

When Farrukh Dhondy's tv series *King Of The Ghetto* was shown by the BBC, a few Bangladeshis picketed TV Centre to show their disapproval of his portrayal of the denizens of Brick Lane. When Rushdie expressed sentiments suitable to the 'cause', he was applauded. But when he claimed the critical freedom of the writer, the same mentality was partly responsible for making him a target of abuse.

I have followed Hanif Kureishi's work in recent years with great interest, which his first novel *The Buddha Of Suburbia* (Faber, hbk £12.99) reinforces. He is the first 'Asian' writer born in Britain to have broken from the dutiful, worthy, 'positive image' constraints with which a race-relations mentality has shackled would-be writers. Dhondy and Rushdie were born elsewhere, and this is reflected in their work. Kureishi is the only homegrown 'Asian', who nevertheless shares the 'two-camera' or stereoscopic observation of British society. He has felt the brunt of disapproval too. *My Beautiful Laundrette* was picketed by Pakistanis at a New York cinema, and he was physically attacked in Bradford for portraying the lead Pakistani character as a homosexual. All the more reason to commend him for continuing to assault the fossil culture that such a mentality promotes.

The novel continues where his film scripts left off: 'Like many Muslim men - beginning with the prophet Mohammed himself, whose absolute statements, served up piping hot from God, inevitably gave rise to absolutism - Anwar thought he was right about everything.'

In some respects, perhaps, the story parallels his own experience. Karim Amir begins his tale with the experience of growing up in suburban Beckenham and ends it living, some years later, in West Kensington. A teenager of mixed parentage, and bisexual orientation, he becomes an actor: acts the Paki but resists being identified as one. His life

on the margins he eventually accepts with a sense of belonging. *Outskirts, Borderline*, are names of Kureishi plays, confirming this pre-occupation with outsiders.

His sardonic novel is a compelling read, partly because of the distance its narrator keeps or is kept from 'official' society of whatever orthodoxy. The Buddha of the title is closer in his philosophy to Sufism than to Buddhism, and the woman he takes up with, and eventually marries, Eva, is an Amazon of the social whirl. She has lost one breast to cancer, but survived to become an interior decorating 'success'. Sadly, some of the half-baked notions of the characters have spread to the writing. So serious a factor as a severed

breast figures only at the beginning and end of the book, and not in the main body of her story. The Indian English is less than convincing. The realities of the actor's experience are glossed over.

The strength of the book lies in its reflection of the 70s from the marginal's viewpoint. The men tend to be weak, relying on the rituals of past domination over women, while the women grow in strength and stature. Karim's sexual encounters are many and energetic, but rarely include a sensual or emotional high. And the complex mixture of affection and scorn with which he regards his Indian father, rings very true of 'an Englishman born and bred - almost'. ●

Beatrix Campbell measures Labour's rebuilding

## Party Piece

What kind of party does the Labour Party want to be? It's a question that remains a conundrum - the party doesn't seem to be in conversation with itself in a way that would produce an answer.

This presents a problem to journalists who chronicle its affairs, not to mention its potential voters and its patient allies. However, *Labour Rebuilt, The New Model Party*, (Fourth Estate, pbk £6.95) by Colin Hughes and Patrick Wintour isn't about a new model party. Actually, it isn't about a party at all. Nor is it really about politics. It is more about the party as a caucus, or rather a coterie. Hughes and Wintour are prolific young writers, but this is an old way of writing history: the kings and queens method. Or maybe it's the Mandelson method.

The story isn't analogous to the New Model Army as much as king-making. It's the story of how the boy king becomes master in his own house.

Any estimate of this book needs to discover whether the problem is the authors or the party itself. Political journalism is not only a player in the political arena - this story confirms the tenacity of political journal-

ism in setting Labour's agenda in the 1980s, in the absence of Labour setting an agenda of its own. Generally, political journalism is good on gossip and bad on theory. And the enduring philistinism and pragmatism of British Labourism leaves it prey to a quaint journalistic ethic - that it's all about telling people what somebody didn't want them to know. The what-really-happened-behind-the-scenes view of history.

These authors are cautioned by their own profession on the one hand and the culture of Labourism on the other, which reduces the politics to brokerage.

There's no explanation for the Labour left's extinction in less than five years, little or nothing on the re-making of the relationship between the unions and the party, not to mention the unions' role in Labour's modernisation, and there's only passing reference to one of the party's most dramatic discoveries once it started listening to women - that it was perceived as a useless (as in the opposite to useful), butch, boys' party which went about its business in a way that belied its rhetoric of equality and democracy.



cism of any authority to match their freshness. The liberals have tended to pat 'black writers' on the back no matter what. Others, with a combination of arrogance and ignorance, have paid lip service and passed on. The critical faculty has been under-exercised. Instead the place of the critic has been usurped by what I call a 'race-relations industry' mentality that has no intention of taking literature seriously. Its followers have applied the concerns of agitprop and advertising copywriters to literary writing and done no one any good.

Bob Rowthorn questions the forecasters

## Megatrash

The meticulously blow-by-blow (literally) account of the party's defence and disarmament is perhaps a paradigm of the party's policy-making process where isolation, chaos and suspicion prevail. It was a classic case, too, of the Left more or less leaving the leadership to get on with making a mess of it, either by abstaining from the process or repeating antique rhetoric. The book's project is how the Labour Party of the 90s has been disciplined, purged and – at long last – professionalised. It wonders whether it will become 'massive and passive' or a 'mass radical, new model party'.

Something else comes to mind. Labour seems to have become a kind of anti-party, a party afraid of itself, fearful, too, of the people. A paranoid party. Paranoia intensified rather than relaxed with the Bennite reforms, when the membership won the right to police the leadership. But is that what people join political parties for?

A new charter of members' rights together with a massive membership campaign, propelled by general secretary Larry Whitty's department and supported by trade unionists like Tom Sawyer and Diana Jeuda, which sought to break with this corrosive culture, is not addressed – and yet it is the critical condition of the party, as a party, existing at all.

But the paranoia extends beyond the led to the leaders – activist... mobilisation... these have become unwords in the Labour leaders' lexicon.

The poll tax is a classic case. It is hated, it touches every adult, and yet the Labour Party leadership has refused to take responsibility for the prospect that people might want to do something. Isn't that what socialist parties, whether new or old models, are there for, to enable people to do something together? Labour's evacuation allows it to piously protest when there's a riot – 'honest guv, it wasn't us'. And so mobilisation is a crisis of law and order and the roundheads are, again, on the run.●

'We stand at the dawn of a new era. Before us is the most important decade in the history of civilisation, a period of stunning technological innovation, unprecedented economic opportunity, surprising political reform, and great cultural rebirth.'

**Megatrends 2000** (Sidgwick & Jackson, hbk £15.00) has received enormous media hype and will make its authors, Naisbitt and Aburdene, a fortune. Everyone loves predictions and this book is full of them, but if you are thinking of buying it, don't waste your money. The 10 key 'megatrends' which they claim to identify, are either of doubtful significance or already well-established and well-known. Already familiar trends are: the emergence of global lifestyles, the rise of the Pacific rim, the triumph of the individual, the emergence of the free market in socialist countries. Other supposed megatrends, such as the growth of do-it-yourself religions and the rise of women into leadership positions, are certainly genuine, but their global importance is grossly exaggerated by these authors.

The aim of this book is allegedly to make sense of the confusing mass of data which bombards us everyday from the media. In fact, the book is even more confusing than the reality which it is supposed to illuminate. The arguments are often jumbled and most of the book is really just a vast kaleidoscope of newspaper and magazine clippings. Moreover, on a number of fundamental issues the assertions are quite at variance with the facts.

'To make the most of this extraordinary decade,' Naisbitt and Aburdene tell us, 'you must be aware of the changes that surround you... Without a structure, a frame of reference, the vast amount of data that comes your way each day will probably whiz right by you.' Some rather important facts seemed to have whizzed right past these authors. Anything which challenges their complacent belief in individualism and free markets is either ignored or brushed aside. For example,



they claim there will be virtually no limits to world economic growth in the 1990s, nothing significant to worry about in the realm of raw materials, energy or population. There will be no energy crisis because 'quite simply, the world is using less energy while producing more' (than in 1974). In fact, world energy consumption is now 25% above the 1974 level and is currently rising by a further 25% per decade. This massive growth will not cause a shortage of energy in the immediate future, but it may have serious environmental implications such as the greenhouse effect. In this 300-page book, less than two pages are devoted to environmental issues which, we are blandly assured, are all being sorted out by world leaders.

Concern about population growth is dismissed in the words: 'But population is pretty much under control, except in Africa, although the population doomsters continue to make their dire predictions.' This is absolute rubbish. World population is currently around 5.5 billion and, on the most optimistic assumptions about

Third World birth rates, will exceed 8 billion in the year 2025. Even then the population will still be rising and is unlikely to stabilise below 10 billion, which is almost twice the present figure. Most of this vast increase will take place in Asia and Latin America, and not in Africa as the authors claim. This is not a mere quibble about numbers. Population growth on such scale has appalling implications in terms of urban squalor and the environment. To limit this growth and deal with its consequences is likely to be the greatest challenge facing humanity in the coming century.

Energy and population are only two examples of where Naisbitt and Aburdene have got it totally wrong. Other examples abound, but there is no space to list them here. However, the basic message is clear. Despite its pretentious title, this book is ill-informed and misleading. Why such a book should have received so much praise is something of a mystery. In the confusing times we live in, I suppose there will be a ready-made audience for false prophets of every kind.●

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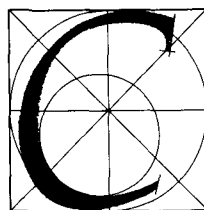
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## Marxism Today

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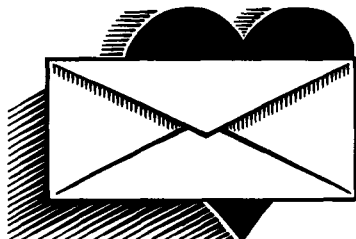
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We are looking for someone who can extend our range of editorial, who is prepared to work long hours and who is enthusiastic about Marxism Today. The successful applicant must either have previous editorial experience, or proven managerial abilities, or a strong and proven intellectual capability — or a combination of all three.

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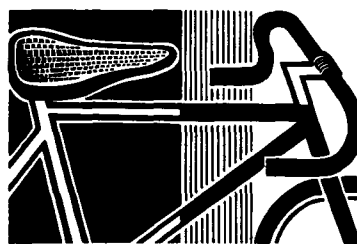
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Previous experience in any of these areas would be useful, but not essential. The individual will be well-organised, feel at ease with figures and be good at working with people.

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**Production:** John Dunn, Gillian Fraser, Gordon Guthrie, Greg Kent.  
**Research:** John Dunn.

## Saatchi And Saatchi

In the final analysis, it was not that much of a pay cut. Charles and Maurice Saatchi, past masters at the art of presentation, took their penance for the losses at their advertising firm in the form of a £187,500 drop in salary. The sacrifice was public, for Maurice at least – Charles has not been seen for so long that there is a question whether he, like God, really exists. But the brothers still receive £437,500 each a year, and their fortune is large enough to have one of Britain's foremost art galleries in their back garden.

The Saatchis have fallen: like George Davies; like Sophie Mirman; like Sir Terence Conran; like John Gunn,

**'The art of persuasion was the art of the possible. If you could sell something, you could run anything. The Saatchis sold Mrs Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher ran Britain'**

whose British and Commonwealth often headed the list of donors to the Conservative Party; like John Ashcroft, praised by Mrs Thatcher as a shining example of the British entrepreneurial spirit; like Tony Berry, who had the audacity to invite Norman Tebbit on to the board of Blue Arrow before the proverbials hit the fan.

These were the stars of the aggressive 80s. They were young men in a hurry. They came from unlikely backgrounds. There was no family money behind them. They were not part of the 'establishment'. Their brash style and American ways made the old money wince.

But if they hadn't suckled on a silver spoon, they weren't poor either. These were Thatcherite heroes, not working-class ones. They were products of the grabbing middle classes – grammar school and redbrick educated, immigrant stock or, even better, immigrants themselves. These were people

with something to prove.

They built up their companies on sweat, toil and 'bloody hard work'. Harvard business school systems. Men with MBAs and mobile phones. Over to New York and back on the Red Eye. I'm in the office before you arrive. I'm still working when you leave. Fear me.

The Saatchis were the key. They proved the beauty of selling a concept. The art of persuasion was the art of the possible. If you could sell something, you could run anything. The Saatchis sold Mrs Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher ran Britain.

Everything was down to marketing and design. At Coloroll, John Ashcroft said, 'Every manager is a sales manager'. At Next, George Davies sold you a suit smart enough for work, trendy enough for play, and tough enough to hold a mobile phone in the pocket.

Even the annual reports were a monument to presentation. When you had scrolled through the pages of arty pictures at designer angles, had your fill of corporate positioning statements, you found that Next had not made provisions for a bond with a repayment bonus, that Saatchi and Saatchi was leaking cash like it was going out of fashion, that Blue Arrow was granting interest-free loans to property ventures in Canvey Island.

Salesmen were the rulers of this empire. You sold bonds, you sold shares, you sold suits, you sold concepts. These people over-borrowed to buy houses in Fulham. These people drove their GTIs too fast down narrow streets in built-up areas. These people were invincible.

And there is the rub. Invincibility only exists until you are defeated. The Saatchis' moment came one day in 1987 when they arrived at the door of 27 Poultry, the headquarters of Midland Bank. Midland was ailing, we all knew that. It had bought Crocker, a Californian bank



**The Saatchis: Fallen icons of the 80s**

whose main skill was losing money. It had so many bad loans in Latin America that it nearly owned Mexico. But its problems were not ones that could be solved by Saatchi and Saatchi.

When the brothers put their offer to the Midland board they were laughed off the premises. It was not so much the audacity – you were expected to go for something beyond your reach, that was the way you proved yourself – it was just it was so inappropriate. The old money sneered, of course it would. The Bank of England would never have allowed such a bid. Saatchi's problem was that even the new money thought it was a bad idea.

Once Saatchi's cover was blown they were on a slippery slope. The stock-market crash didn't help. In the boom days of the mid-80s, a company could buy anything in sight, selling its shares to an investing public whose appetite had been whetted by Telecom and Gas, TSB and Virgin. It was pure 'buy now, pay later'. But once the shares fell out of bed, who would pick them up? The piper had to be paid. The puttable-convertible-redeemable preference shares – which

seemed like a good idea at the time – were now a nightmare.

High interest rates – the product of a smooth selling job through the 1987 election – highlighted any weaknesses in the concept. It was back to basics in business and no amount of design could paper over the cracks.

The Saatchi and Saatchi empire was built on confidence and egos. Once the image was cracked, it became embarrassing to sit at a dinner party and say you work for the Saatchis. If you are not on the up and up, where are you going?

The Saatchis are hoist by their own petard. Saatchi and Saatchi as an entity will never be the same again. The City is salivating as it speculates who will be the next 80s' whiz-kid to fall. Michael Green of Carlton Communications? Roy Bishko of Tie Rack? Asil Nadir of Polly Peck? But the bets are off on the man who was with the Saatchis on the way up, and learned from their mistakes – Martin Sorrel of WPP, which has just eclipsed Saatchi and Saatchi as the largest advertising group in the world.●

Jason Nisse

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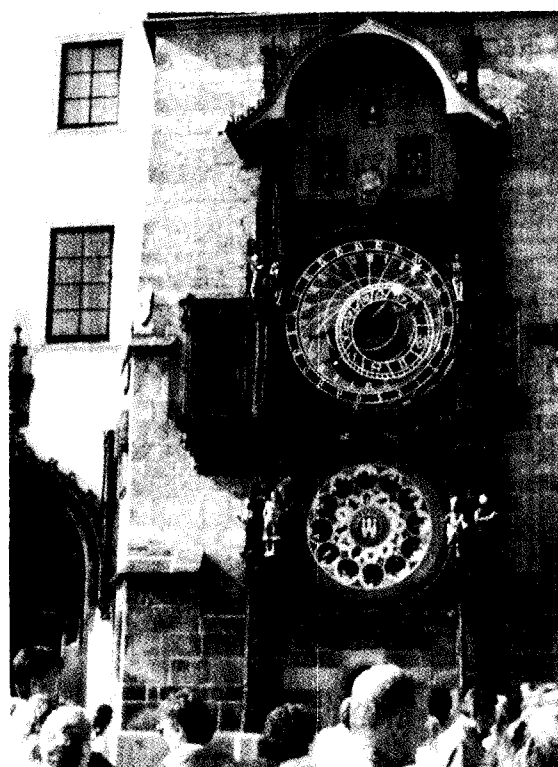
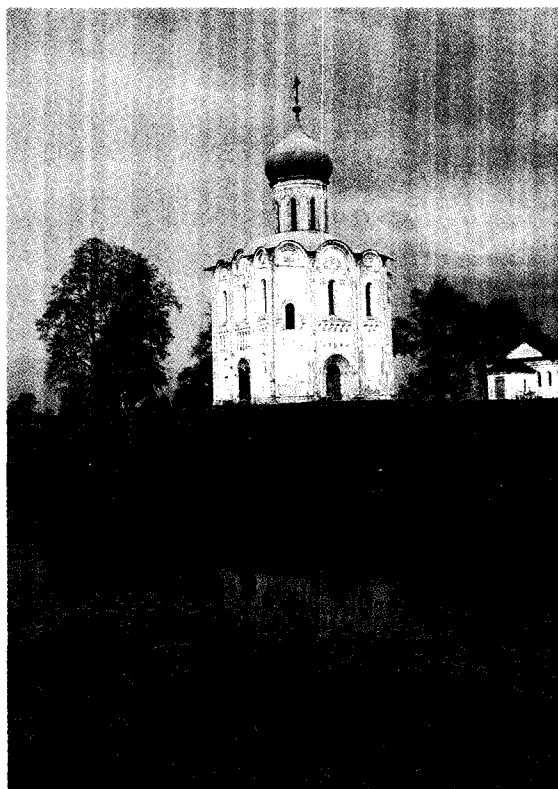
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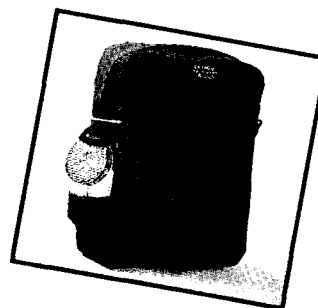
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